

# RADHAKRISHNAN AND INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE

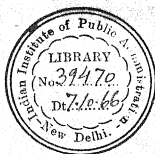
THE PHILOSOPHY AND WORLD VISION  
OF SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

J. G. ARAPURA

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## Foreword

Dr. J. G. Arapura has succeeded in writing a highly intelligent, informed and scholarly book on the philosophy of Radhakrishnan. It has hitherto been Radhakrishnan's misfortune that he has been largely ignored by the professional philosophers of the West, whether of the linguistic-analytic or the existentialist school, while the defenders and exponents of his thought have on the whole tended to be somewhat uncritical. Dr. Arapura seeks most successfully to situate Radhakrishnan in his due place in both the Indian and Western philosophical traditions; he sees him rightly as a "mediator" as well as a re-interpreter. He is also in no small way an original thinker. In the Western tradition Radhakrishnan mediates between Hegel and Bergson, in the Eastern between Śankara and Ramanuja. In his creative, integral, and "consummatory" Vedanta he stands, among the moderns, nearest to Rabindranath Tagore.

Dr. Arapura's sympathetic approach to Radhakrishnan does not blind him either to his inadequacies or to the confusion of his terminology, a "common iniquity of philosophers". He is particularly telling in his critique of Radhakrishnan's oft-expressed impatience with logic. "It is by no means easy", he writes, "to find out what aspect of 'logic' he is objecting to, because it is not readily clear as to what he means by 'logic'". Sometimes he appears to condemn it wholesale, sometimes just certain aspects of it. Sometimes he even condemns logic as necessary to philosophy". And Dr. Arapura then proceeds to put order into what needs ordering (130-1). In Radhakrishnan's treatment of both aesthetics and ethics, Dr. Arapura finds even greater deficiencies, and despite his evident admiration for his subject's originality and attempted synthesis of Eastern and Western thought into an overarching philosophy of "integrated experience," he points out with great justice that in Radhakrishnan's scheme of things there is no room either for aesthetics or for ethics as commonly understood; for how can "the pith of Amos, the superlative winsomeness of a Gautama and the parables of Jesus" be regarded as "the highest repre-



sentations of aesthetics"? On the ethical side he points out the great weakness of Radhakrishnan's position. "The realm of common morality for the natural man does not receive any positive attention from him. He develops no criteria for making ordinary judgements of good and bad, and right and wrong" (210). This weakness is as evident in Teilhard de Chardin as it is in Radhakrishnan, with whom he has much in common; and he too has been subject to attack for the same reasons. It is indeed the weakness of Radhakrishnan's philosophy of integrated experience as it is of any purely naturalistic philosophy that in them there is no natural place for ethics as commonly understood. This Dr. Arapura has done very well to bring out.

All this, however, does not invalidate the greatness of Radhakrishnan's achievement to which Dr. Arapura pays due homage; and his achievement would appear to be, that he, like Tagore, infuses a new life into the Vedanta, broadens it and gives it, an evolutionary dynamism that is all his own. This is the interest of his philosophy as well as the weakness of his history of philosophy, for he tends to read his own views into the thoughts of his predecessors, and this must interfere with the historical perspective. Dr. Arapura is perhaps too gentle with his subject in this respect. What he has triumphantly succeeded in doing is that in giving a coherent account of Radhakrishnan's philosophy he has delved below the rhetorical surface and exhumed the thought underneath, both the creative insights and the frequent evasions. In this he has rendered the philosophical public a great service, for he will make his work seem more significant to a wider public of serious-minded people.

*New York,*  
*May 21, 1962*

R. C. ZAEHNER  
*Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions  
and Ethics, University of Oxford*

## Preface

This work is an inquiry into the nature and scope of the Philosophy of Integral Experience as expounded by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in his numerous writings. The term "integral experience" describes the central theme of Radhakrishnan's thought. The author had the privilege of discussing with Dr. Radhakrishnan himself some aspects of his philosophy in October 1954; during that discussion Dr. Radhakrishnan himself confirmed that it would be correct to call his philosophy by the name "integral experience".

The writer is convinced that a work of the kind that is undertaken here is eminently called for as there is a need for a more precise understanding than exists now of what Radhakrishnan is trying to do, especially in view of the great influence he wields in the world of thought today, not only in India but also in other countries where circles of scholars are engaged in the comparative study of philosophy and of religion. Other studies have been conducted on the philosophy of our subject, but in the humble opinion of this author, the principal metaphysical idea which is the bed-rock of his thought is not apprehended as clearly as might be desired. An effort is made in the following pages to make up for this lacuna. Accordingly, one of the main tasks in this project is to bring to light the bed-rock idea that lies hidden and scattered all over Radhakrishnan's works. A certain amount of analysing and systematising, however, has proved unavoidable in the course of this task.

The question has often been asked, What is Radhakrishnan's philosophy? The answer is given positively here: Integral Experience. To be sure, the philosophy that Radhakrishnan articulates is a version of that self-same Vedanta which has always moved the best Indian minds, but all the same, it is an original version. Equally surely, it is a theory of mysticism, although an enlarged and broad-based one: it attempts to absorb the essence of reason as well as that of what is ordinarily called intuition so as to engender a most comprehensive mystical

method. Above all, it is a metaphysics of religion, besides being an epistemology of mysticism.

Knowledge, or rather, the revelation of ultimate reality through personal realization is its main problem. Every aspect of human life, every sphere of human endeavour and every department of knowledge is brought under the sway of integral experience. Accordingly, Radhakrishnan has a word to say about science, art and ethics, even as he has taken care not to leave out society and its destiny, politics and its conduct. With regard to the central epistemological aim of integral experience we have raised some questions. But the questions were raised only after an honest effort had been made to understand analytically and as thoroughly as possible the nature and scope of the method, and they were raised within the frame-work of unquestionable appreciation, keeping in mind the standards of objectivity that the eminent subject of this study would expect from any analyst of his thought. It has been easier to point out the great and genuine insights in the philosophy under consideration, for they occur in abundance. Furthermore, the author has endeavoured to call attention to the fact that Radhakrishnan's Philosophy fulfils for us a central aim of its, namely to give us a satisfying and wholesome vision of life; herein lies, in the judgement of the present writer, the real merit of our subject's work as a philosopher—no one can be truly called a philosopher who fails to do this.

The significance of Radhakrishnan's thought lies in that he has attempted, with considerable success, to restate certain aspects of Vedanta and recapture the eternal meaning of religion for modern man. He has related the imperishable truths of religion to modern inquiry, setting them in vivid contrast to the grand and magnificent structures of modern man's ignorance which he is pleased to call knowledge, and has addressed his message to contemporary man in his predicament.

In an era in which much religious writing reflects world-weariness and pessimism, a full-blooded yet mature vision of hope and unaging youth of spirit is wholly refreshing. Much religious philosophy and theology in the West appear to be prematurely old and tired, although writers vie with one another to put forth literature in quantity but seldom strike a new note. The eternal springs of religion must battle against the dangerous

spiritual disease of cramming the meaning of endless ages and numberless worlds into our immediate present and manifest surroundings. The message that comes from philosophers like Radhakrishnan, although speaking from very old traditions—or rather precisely because of it—does much to combat the corrosiveness of the spirit that weakens religion and renders man the victim of nervousness and hopelessness. Radhakrishnan, like Sri Aurobindo, reminds us that the career of religion has only just begun, leading man to a vision of himself beyond the fortuitous circumstances of his “history”.

In the course of the discussion in the following pages, frequent references have been made both to some Western philosophers and to some orthodox exponents of Advaita Vedanta. This is only legitimate as Radhakrishnan's thought has had its growth in unmistakable relation to the main currents of idealism of both India and the West. An attempt has been made to point out Radhakrishnan's originality as a thinker and implicitly to give an account of the reasons for his influence which this writer feels is destined to be more than just transitory.

Radhakrishnan's eminence is not confined to the academic world, for his high place in the national life of India and his significant role in India's cultural renaissance are well-known facts. It is notable that he, who is essentially above politics, after having served India and the world with such distinction for several years as India's Vice-president, has recently been elevated to the presidency of the Republic.

Finally, a word may be said about the history of this work itself. Originally this was presented to Columbia University as a thesis, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is presented here in very much the same form, with some extremely minor revisions in a few places. The author acknowledges his debt to Professor Horace L. Friess of Columbia University for the assistance he gave him by offering constructive criticism and helpful suggestions. He acknowledges with gratitude the facilities he received at the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, Maharashtra, where he was a fellow during the years 1956-58, for this work as well as other researches, expressing special thanks to its director, Professor G. R. Malkani. He wishes especially to express his sincere thanks to Professor R. C. Zaehner of Oxford Uni.

versity, Dr. Radhakrishnan's successor in the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics, for kindly writing the Foreword to this work as well as for his friendly discussions. Most of all the author is grateful to Dr. Radhakrishnan himself for his graciousness in discussing several points of interest in this study with him, as has been mentioned above. It must be mentioned in particular that no one is responsible for the views expressed in this book and for its imperfections but the author himself.

*Hartford, Conn., U.S.A.*  
*June 8, 1962*

J. G. ARAPURA

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J. G. ARAPURA

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## I. Introduction

### I

#### THE DIFFERENT ROLES AND THE UNDERLYING UNITY

It is but natural that a philosopher like Radhakrishnan, whose thought is as rich as it is varied, should become the subject of study from several angles. Radhakrishnan can, with equal justification, be regarded as comparative philosopher or historian of Indian Philosophy or philosopher of Religion. He is all the three. But it is hardly necessary—nor in fact warranted—to think of the different roles in which he is cast as exclusive of one another. There persists in and through these roles a certain identity of thought and vision. In other words, Radhakrishnan has a philosophy, a special point of view, which integrates the various parts of his thought and gives them unity, and puts its stamp of special character upon them. By way of anticipation of the results of the investigation that we are beginning here, we might say that Radhakrishnan's philosophy or his special point of view is that of Integral Experience, which reveals itself through the labyrinthine structure of his thought. Now we must undertake a brief examination of the different roles in which we have placed him.

#### I. RADHAKRISHNAN AS COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHER

In point of fact most of India's leading contemporary philosophers have been in one way or other comparative philosophers. Necessity made them so. There are certain geographical and historical factors which have acted as a spur to comparative thinking. As Professor D. M. Datta remarks, since India's past history and geographical position have made her the meeting place of many races, cultures and religions, it is only natural that she should offer a favourable atmosphere for the comparative

study of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Among Radhakrishnan's great contemporaries who have attempted the same task as himself the names of Sir Brojendranath Seal, K. C. Bhattacharya and Sri Aurobindo—all of them now no more—are well known.<sup>2</sup> But in Radhakrishnan we have a thinker who has set himself rather deliberately and purposefully to the task of creating some kind of a philosophical synthesis of the major streams of philosophy, Eastern and Western, particularly of the idealistic traditions.

In the second East-West Philosophers' conference held at the University of Hawaii in 1949, the need for such a synthesis leading to a World Philosophy was well recognized; in fact such recognition was the major inspiration behind the conference itself. In the report of this conference, Professor Charles A. Moore, writes:

At long last the demand for a World Philosophy—whatever form it may take—has been realized by philosophers, and the challenge entailed by that demand has been accepted. Philosophy, to be Philosophy, must be universal. It must be the study of all time and all existence. And it must include the experiences of all mankind. Total truth is the very life-blood of Philosophy as well as the essential need of the world. Total perspective is the essence of the philosophical method in distinction from all other methods.<sup>3</sup>

Though, of course, such a project as the fostering of a World Philosophy has practical and human problems to conjure with it suggests the need of something of great importance, namely, the unceasing conversation not only between various types, but also between various geographical divisions of philosophy. In short, it tells us of the need of more diligent work in the field of Comparative Philosophy. Comparative Philosophy as a science is relatively new, though from ancient times the comparative method has always been followed by a few scholars. But as a vigorous intellectual pursuit, it dates only from the "discovery" of the Orient and its cultural wealth in the early nineteenth century. We shall give below a few samples—selected for their

<sup>1</sup> Paul Arthur Schilpp, *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, pp. 663-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 663.

<sup>3</sup> Charles A. Moore (Ed.), *Essays in East-West Philosophy*, p. 1.

significance—of methods that comparative philosophers of recent times have followed.

*Ananda Coomaraswamy and the Method of Agreement Based on the "First Philosophy"*

Scholars who have been exposed to both Eastern and Western philosophers have developed different reactions to the situation. Some like Ananda Coomaraswamy—he is only the representative of a certain type of approach—have been able to detect essential elements which compose the perennial philosophy or "First Philosophy" in all of them, underlying all differences in thought, creed and practice. This is a wisdom which "is one in itself,"<sup>4</sup> otherwise called metaphysics. Coomaraswamy in his numerous writings on religion, art and culture has sought to establish this. He has especially examined the field of religion, which, as is well known, has the distinction of being the great divider. He declares that there is no other ground whatever

upon which all men can be in absolute agreement, excepting that of metaphysics, which we assert is the basis and the norm of all religious formulations. Once such a common ground is recognized it becomes a simple matter to agree to disagree on matters of details, for it will be seen that the various dogmatic formulations are no more than paraphrases of one and the same principle.<sup>5</sup>

*F. S. C. Northrop and the Method of "Epistemic Correlation"*

If scholars of the persuasion of Dr. Coomaraswamy push deep-rooted agreement too far—and we think that they decidedly do—there are other scholars who insist on the dissimilarity of the philosophical ideas of East and West. Prof. Northrop, one of the most important thinkers in the comparative field, distinguishes between Eastern and Western philosophies as generally formed of "concepts by intuition" and "concepts by postulation" respectively.<sup>6</sup> The process of knowledge in the former is "aesthetic", while in the latter it is "theoretic". "Blue" in the sense of the sensed colour is an example of concept by intuition. "Blue" in the sense of a number of wave-lengths for light in

<sup>4</sup> *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities*, p. 128.

"experimentally confirmed, deductively formulated electromagnetic theory" is an example of concept by postulation.<sup>7</sup> The difference between the two methods of knowledge is succinctly expressed thus: "By the method of hypothesis and its indirect mode of verification we are able to learn of structures and orders of entities in ourselves and nature which have a character other than, and different from, the relatedness and ordering of the immediately sensed qualities in the immediately sensed aesthetic continuum."<sup>8</sup> For this reason, however, Northrop does not despair of combining the different notions of philosophy; on the contrary, he thinks it perfectly possible. He has suggested the method of "epistemic correlation", a method that does not annihilate the distinctions between different families of ideas, but would rather treat them as complementary and, complementing each other, forming a whole. "Although the two components are quite distinct, the assimilation of the aesthetic component to the theoretic component is one of the principal tasks of all knowledge, scientific and philosophical."<sup>9</sup> As a matter of fact, Northrop feels that it is an imperative of our present epoch in history that we work out ways of relating ideas despite their real differences. Philosophy and culture will be the richer for it. "The time is here", he declares, "...when we must learn to combine Oriental and Occidental values..."<sup>10</sup>

#### *What is Radhakrishnan's Method?*

Radhakrishnan's method has similarities to both the above-mentioned ones. Sometimes he asserts that ultimately all philosophy aims at the same thing and reveals an essential unity at the depth. In this he is very much like Ananda Coomaraswamy; both of them adopt the standpoint of idealism or what is often called the "perennial philosophy".

Radhakrishnan observes:

In a sense, as Hegel said, all philosophy is idealistic. In contrasting appearance and reality, fact and truth, existence and essence, it is led to admit an ideal world beyond the pheno-

<sup>7</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *The Taming of the Nations*. Cf. also *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities*.

<sup>8</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 451.

<sup>9</sup> F. Thilly and L. Wood, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 653.

<sup>10</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 4.

menal. Even absolute materialism is idealism, though of a crude kind, for the matter to which all existence is reduced is not concrete reality but an abstract idea.<sup>11</sup>

To this he adds:

If we are not carried away by the noise of the controversy among the philosophical sects, but watch the deeper currents which are shaping them, we seem to find a strong tendency to insist on the insights of idealism, though, of course, the language and the style are different.<sup>12</sup>

As one interested in discovering unity in philosophy from the standpoint of idealism, in the sense of "the perennial philosophy", it is but natural that he should select the field of religion<sup>13</sup> for his searching enquiry; for religion is pre-eminently the repository of the wisdom that philosophers of this particular type of idealistic persuasion seek. In this he is fundamentally in agreement with another great savant of contemporary India, Dr. Bhagavan Das, the author of the famous (in India) book *The Essential Unity of All Religions*. Dr. Bhagavan Das declares that not only in the principles of religion but in all human wisdom, including science, the proclamation of a unity that exists in the depth of all human experience and thought can be heard.<sup>14</sup>

Now, to come back to Radhakrishnan, if sometimes he pro-

<sup>11</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that modern reform movements in Hinduism have taken a very keen interest in Comparative Religion. Monier-Williams describes the founder of the Brahmo-Samaj movement, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, as "perhaps the first earnest-minded investigator in the Science of Comparative Religion that the world has produced"—See A. C. Bouquet, *Hinduism*, p. 123.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. "Those who wish to see Discord, will see Discord only. Those who wish impartially to examine both sides of the question, will see both justly. They will discern the Truth, which always stands in the mean between opposite extremes: viz. the Truth of essential unity in superficial Diversity, in religious as well as in scientific thought. Such unity is established by the mediation of philosophy. . . . To recognize that Unity in the Essentials of all Religions, is to promote the cause of civilization." Bhagavan Das, *The Essential Unity of All Religions*, p. 14.

The discovery of religious unity of Man as a potent force for fostering unity

claims the unity of all philosophy, at other times he tries to show forth its diversity. He seems to adopt a standpoint not dissimilar to Northrop's, and often writes contrasting the predominant tendencies of Eastern and Western philosophies. Observes Radhakrishnan, "While the dominant feature of Eastern thought is its insistence on creative intuition, the Western systems are generally characterized by a greater adherence to critical intelligence."<sup>15</sup> But he cautions us against pressing this distinction too closely, because "it is relative and not absolute". "It describes the chief tendencies," he adds, "and there are in fact many exceptions. It is only a question of the distribution of emphasis."<sup>16</sup>

Like Bhagavan Das, Radhakrishnan also has a notion of unity in diversity, which enables him to continually move from the second position, that is, the position of distinctions, back to the first position, namely that of unity. He asserts that the distinctions are real, and not to be lightly passed over nor to be dismissed as insignificant, but he also points to a ground unity that lies behind and beneath all distinctions. He believes that a dialogical interchange between different systems of ideas is possible. "Though Asia and Europe are different," he writes, "they are

of mankind has been emphasized by Radhakrishnan also in many ways. He declares, "While the prophet founders of religions declare that the community is worldwide and make no distinction between Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, the traders in religion declare that the greatness of one's own creed and group is the end and coercion and violence are the ways to it." *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 39.

In his own poet's way, Tagore also gives expression to the same sentiment and to the same faith in his Hibert Lectures, published under the title, *The Religion of Man*.

<sup>15</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, Radhakrishnan himself does not exercise sufficient care in illustrating this doctrine of distinctions by examples. For instance, in one place he writes, "From the Socratic insistence on the concept to Russell's mathematical logic, the history of Western philosophy has been a supreme illustration of the primacy of the logical." *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 133. Elsewhere he writes, "The great philosophers admit that the major convictions of life are born of intuition. Socrates, for example, preferred to rest his case not on inductive evidence from observed facts but from arguments based on axioms and intuitions. The voice of the inner demon counted for him more than external perception or logical reasoning." *Ibid*, p. 158. The probable explanation for this mistake is that the doctrines of distinctions and unity get very much mixed up in his mind.

not so completely different as to disallow an interchange of goods, material and spiritual." He goes further and points out, immediately below the statement just quoted, that this sort of dialogical relation is possible just because deep down, beneath all distinctions, there is a ground of unity. "This interchange has occurred throughout the centuries and points to the underlying unity of the human mind."<sup>17</sup> This is how he could say, "The fountain-heads of the Vedas, including the Upanishads, in the East and Socrates and Plato in the West, set forth this creed in broad and flexible terms."<sup>18</sup> Thus he tries to maintain the doctrine of unity as well as the doctrine of distinctions in the study of Comparative Philosophy.

*Radhakrishnan's Qualifications for being a Comparative Philosopher*

Radhakrishnan is remarkably well-versed in both Indian and Western philosophies. That is undoubtedly the first requisite for a comparative philosopher. It is a known fact that too many scholars in the field of Comparative Philosophy are handicapped by their inadequate knowledge of one or the other of the two great philosophical traditions. One who has read Radhakrishnan's works even cursorily will agree with Prof. P. T. Raju when he declares: "There are few scholars like him, who have grasped the spirit of Eastern and Western thought alike."<sup>19</sup> The late Professor C. E. M. Joad, in his book setting forth certain aspects of Radhakrishnan's philosophy, known by the title, "Counter-Attack from the East", describes Radhakrishnan as a "liaison officer between two civilizations",<sup>20</sup> and assures us that for this post he "possesses a rare combination of qualities", for "to the European he seems a child of the West"<sup>21</sup> and at the same time "in all essentials he remains the Hindu sage."<sup>22</sup> Because Radhakrishnan can speak to the East and to the West in language that each can understand, the late Professor J. H. Muirhead called him a "philosophical bilingual".<sup>23</sup> In view of the fact that he

<sup>17</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> B. T. Raju, *Idealist Thought of India*, p. 331.

<sup>20</sup> C. E. M. Joad, *Counter-Attack from the East*, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>23</sup> "He has the rare qualification of being equally well-versed in the great European and the not less great Asiatic tradition which may be said to hold



can initiate an intelligent and intelligible discourse between Eastern and Western thought in general, Radhakrishnan is in a supremely favoured position to make a valuable contribution to the study of Comparative Philosophy.

*What Purpose Comparative Philosophy Serves ?*

This question we shall answer with special reference to the thought of Radhakrishnan. But the answer will partly depend on the answer to the questions, "what purpose any philosophy serves ?" and "what is the aim of philosophy as philosophy ?" Two broad answers can be given. One is given by Professor Wm. Pepperell Montague and the other by the leftwing Hegelians. Radhakrishnan seems to subscribe to both views. Professor Montague defines the function of philosophy as vision.<sup>24</sup> He argues for substituting the enquiry as to the "what" for the enquiry as to the "which."<sup>25</sup> The job of philosophy is not to deal with facts—which is the work of science,—but to give us a vision of meaning and purpose of life, of existence and of the universe. There is no doubt that Prof. Montague's contention is very relevant and acquires more and more significance in the present state of philosophy.

Radhakrishnan has something to say which is very similar to Professor Montague's definition of philosophy as vision. Quoting Touchstone's question to Corin in *As You Like It*, "Hast any philosophy in thee shepherd ?" he comments:

Shakespeare means by philosophy not a system of abstract thought or a technical discipline of the schools but an attitude of mind which can be best described as "idealistic." Have you that spiritual dimension to your being, that mood of reflective enquiry and self-contemplation . . . ? . . . Philosophy is understanding, contemplation, insight, and a philosopher can find no rest until he gains a view or vision of the world of things and persons which will enable him to interpret the manifold experiences as expressive, in some sort, of a purpose.<sup>26</sup>

in solution between them the spiritual wisdom of the world, and of thus speaking as a philosophical bilingualist upon it."—Muirhead's review of *An Idealist View of Life*, in *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1932.

<sup>24</sup> Wm. Pepperell Montague, "Philosophy as Vision," in *The International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XLIV, Number 1, October 1933.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 15, 16.

In the vision-ic function of philosophy, comparative study, undoubtedly, can be fruitfully employed. For in gaining a vision it is better to draw from the riches of the philosophical experiences of the whole of mankind than to depend exclusively on one particular tradition. Such is Radhakrishnan's position.

The other answer as to the aim of philosophy, we said, is given by the left-wing Hegelians. That answer is that philosophy is to serve the practical ends of human society.<sup>27</sup> We select Marx as the propounder par excellence of the doctrine that the purpose of philosophy should be practical, but we do not mean to ignore the fact that there are other equally eligible candidates who could adorn the role. Any left-wing Hegelian, and supremely Dewey, could just as well have been chosen as the spokesman of this point of view. But we were persuaded in our selection of Marx chiefly by considering his well-known dictum, "Hitherto philosophers have variously interpreted the world, the real task is to change it."<sup>28</sup> As a matter of fact that tradition in philosophy which had been distinctly influenced by religious purposes had always had a practical point of view, although the practical there was that which concerned the salvation of the soul.

"To the Indian mind," writes Radhakrishnan, "philosophy is essentially practical, dealing as it does with the fundamental anxieties of human beings, which are more insistent than abstract speculations. We are not contemplating the world from outside, we are in it."<sup>29</sup> It is noteworthy that pragmatism or practicability was characteristic of all ancient Indian thinkers, but particularly it was of the essence of the Buddha's teachings. Hiriyanna speaks of the Buddha thus: "Deliverance from pain and evil was his own concern and he neither found time nor need to unravel metaphysical subtleties. He was thus eminently practical in his teaching."<sup>30</sup> The practical orientation of Radhakrishnan's

<sup>27</sup> Radhakrishnan writes about Marx's philosophy, "The test of all truth is practical. . . . Marx adopts what is known as the pragmatic character of truth." *Religion and Society*, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> *Eleventh thesis against Feuerbach*. Cf. *Religion and Society*, p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> *The Spirit in Man*. (*Contemporary Indian Philosophy*).

<sup>30</sup> M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 137. The Buddha tells his disciples that surely he knew more than he had told them. "And wherefore, my disciples, have I not told you that? Because, my disciples, it brings you no profit, because it does not conduce to progress in holiness, because it does not lead to the turning from the earthly, to peace, to knowledge, to illumina-

philosophy and that of Marxism is, however, very different; Marx was a materialist, who explained consciousness in terms of material, dialectical processes, and Radhakrishnan is an idealist, for whom consciousness is a self-existent substance. Accordingly the ways in which they respectively seek to give shape to their practical outlook on philosophy differ considerably. For Radhakrishnan:

The supreme task of our generation is to give a soul to the world-consciousness, to develop ideals and institutions necessary for the creative expression of the world's soul, to transmit these loyalties and impulses to future generations and train them into world-citizens.<sup>31</sup>

It is precisely here that Comparative Philosophy comes in, for it has its place in fostering a new world-consciousness. Marx's materialistic view of consciousness and Radhakrishnan's idealistic view of the same result in what each calls "true humanism" and "new humanism," respectively. A new humanism, Radhakrishnan feels is already "on the horizon."<sup>32</sup> This new humanism is to appear as the result of "a new cultural synthesis", that is, by combining all the existing spiritual, moral and social values, and not as in Marx by declaring them to be false, and then, after annihilating them, by establishing "true" ones in their place. One of the noteworthy features of Radhakrishnan as a thinker is that he does not encourage any violent rupture with the existing body of ideas or break with the existing pattern of life. It is not that he is just conservative, but that he believes that progress has to take place in organic continuity with the past and that it has to proceed by synthetic inclusion of as many things as possible. This is what he implies when he speaks of the "mobilization of the wisdom of the world",<sup>33</sup> which ought now and hereafter to be undertaken consciously and with deliberation rather than happen naturally as a result of the chance intercourses of people. In this way "We must evolve ideals, habits, and sentiments which would enable us to build up a world

tion, to nirvana: therefore have I not declared it unto you."—Quoted from Oldenberg, *Buddha*, by Hiriyanna, in *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 137.

<sup>31</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. viii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii.

community, live in a cooperative commonwealth...<sup>34</sup> This is the nature of the practical task that Comparative Philosophy has to perform.

## 2. RADHAKRISHNAN AS HISTORIAN OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

To be a historian of Indian Philosophy, like being the historian of any other philosophy, is cognate with the role of comparative philosopher. Whether it be for the enrichment of the vision-ic aspect of philosophy or for the reinforcement of its practical power to achieve synthesis of cultures, "the soul" of each system of thought, that is "the factor of individuality" in it, "without effacing the special features of that philosophy" must be studied.<sup>35</sup> Professor S. K. Saksena is right in saying, "it is necessary, therefore, to try to discover—as a preliminary step for a perhaps later stage of synthesis—the distinctive and unique traits of each system of thought representative of a culture before an attempt is made towards a rapprochement of them."<sup>36</sup>

In short, the demands of Comparative Philosophy itself will make a man, who undertakes a fruitful study of it, a historian of philosophy. The converse is also true: this condition will make scholars like Radhakrishnan historians of philosophy with a difference, because they do not, and cannot, separate their task of historical investigation from their interest in the ultimate purposes of comparative study.

### *How Does Radhakrishnan Pursue this Historical Study of Indian Philosophy?*

Radhakrishnan explains rightly that there are two different ways in which a historical study of philosophy can be pursued: according to the one, we disinter the past from its antique settings and make it living, while according to the other, we treat the past as past, and our concern is only for the accuracy of historical details.<sup>37</sup> Radhakrishnan has chosen the first way, which makes

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii.

<sup>35</sup> S. K. Saksena, *The Nature of Consciousness in Hindu Philosophy*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Radhakrishnan is guided by the principle that Hegel enunciates for the study of history. "The history of philosophy in its true meaning deals not with

him more of a philosophical historian of Indian Philosophy than a mere academic historian. To study history in this way is a task of "creative logic", "a task which involves not merely descriptions and expositions, but a constructive synthesis, to effect which, the synthesizer must pay great attention to the logic of ideas, draw inferences, suggest explanations and formulate theories which would introduce some order into the shapeless mass of unrelated facts."<sup>38</sup>

The second way of pursuing historical study does not meet with Radhakrishnan's approval. He criticizes many historians of philosophy as mere fossil-hunters or "ragpickers." So he writes: "A mere linguist regards the views of ancient Indian thinkers as so many fossils lying scattered throughout the upheaved and faulty strata of the history of philosophy, and from this point of view any interpretation which makes them alive and significant is dismissed as far-fetched and untrue."<sup>39</sup> He insists that a "historian of philosophy must approach his task, not as a mere philologist or even as a scholar but as a philosopher who uses his scholarship as an instrument to wrest from words the thoughts that underlie them."<sup>40</sup> Hegel has some unkind words for these non-philosophical historians of philosophy, whom he likens "to animals which have listened to all the tones in some music, but to whose senses the unison, the harmony of their tones have not penetrated."<sup>41</sup> To the philologist, the views of ancient thinkers are fossils to be recorded, catalogued and assigned to their appropriate thought deposits; to the philosopher they are significant only in so far as they throw light on the present problems. The endeavour to exhume the corpses of the past seems to Radhakrishnan irrelevant, and even inappropriate to the philosopher's vocation. Too many historians of philosophy are philologists, or men with some other kind of mental equipment and interest

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the past, but with the eternal and veritable present; and in its results resembles not a museum of aberrations of the human intellect, but a pantheon of God-like figures representing various stages of the immanent logic of all human thought." *Logic* by Hegel, Wallace's translation. Quoted by Radhakrishnan in *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 672.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 671.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 671.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 672, footnote.

than those that would help them gain a philosophical comprehension of past philosophy.<sup>42</sup>

*History of Philosophy as Philosophy*

Philosophy is to be discovered in its history; but it is no easy task to discover it there. It requires not only a deep reflective understanding of the philosophical ideas to be met with in the writings of past philosophers, but also a personal encounter with the philosophers themselves, so that we may get to the meaning that lies even behind their words. Radhakrishnan observes: "The philosophies are not sets of propositions conclusive or mistaken, but the expression and evolution of a mind with which and in which we must live if we wished to know how the systems shaped themselves."<sup>43</sup> He insists that "doctrines of particular schools are relative to their environment and have to be viewed together."<sup>44</sup> In another place he writes: "They have no sense apart from when and by whom and for whom they were meant."<sup>45</sup> Elaborating further the need of personal encounter, he continues:

The formulators of philosophical systems are not abstract thinkers or anonymous beings without birthdate or dwelling place. The date of a thinker and the place of the origin and growth are not external labels tacked on to systems, merely for placing them in proper chronological order. Like all thought philosophical thought belongs to the context of life... To understand their thought we must learn to feel and understand their world. ... Only in that way can we understand their living effective communion with us.<sup>46</sup>

A philosopher's views are to be seen as answers that he gave to the particular questions that his age put to him.<sup>47</sup> "We must

<sup>42</sup> With no disrespect meant to the other well-known historian of Indian Philosophy, Prof. S. N. Dasgupta, we might urge that the difference between him and Radhakrishnan in their respective approaches to the problem, is that the latter develops a special point of view, a philosophy through the historical study, while the former remains historian. This is not to under-rate the value of Dasgupta's monumental service to the study of the history of Indian philosophy.

<sup>43</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 56.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>45</sup> *Fragments of A Confession*, in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 56.

recognize the solidarity of philosophy with history, of intellectual life with social conditions."<sup>48</sup>

Radhakrishnan adopts the unique method of reconstructing the philosophers of the past—in their environment,—the philosophers themselves and not just their thoughts. This, again, is not a mere objective task without the historian's personal involvement in the history of philosophy. A merely objective task would not be philosophical. Neither do we have sufficient material to prosecute such an objective study successfully, because "so unhistorical, or perhaps so ultra-philosophical was the nature of the ancient Indian that we know more about the philosophies than about the philosophers."<sup>49</sup>

This method means discovering the philosopher himself, as an existent thinker, in relation to the environment and in organic continuity with history, the philosopher as a whole, rather than his philosophy. This is the criterion which he employs throughout his study of the history of Indian Philosophy for probing the thought of the past from the hoary antiquity of the Vedas down to the comparatively recent times of the scholastics (*Āchāryas*). In this way Radhakrishnan seeks to bring back to life the great seers of the Upanishads, the great commentators, like Sankara and Rāmānuja, the great philosophical reformers like Buddha and Mahāvīra. As Radhakrishnan says: "We tend to see Socrates with the eyes of Plato, or Plato with the eyes of Aristotle or Ploinus."<sup>50</sup> What is needed is to disinter "the original genius"—whoever he happens to be—from the "scholastic explanations," which "overwhelm" his teaching.<sup>51</sup> Armed with this criterion, Radhakrishnan—to the chagrin of some literal-minded scholastics of modern India—has never hesitated to enter upon very controversial issues or to offer a daring solution to them.

Radhakrishnan is aware that finding philosophy in its history is a task that involves some perils. The criteria of reconstructing the thinkers of the past must be guided by something more than arbitrary choices or subjective inclinations. For this his answer is, "The only safeguard against this risk is through the adoption of the comparative method. We should then be able

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>50</sup> *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I, p. 674 (Appendix).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 674 (Appendix).

to bring out what is characteristic of each tradition and appreciate its value."<sup>52</sup>

The comparative method will be more fruitful, if it is itself guided by an apriori concept of the organic development of thought—which latter is an implicate of the notion of history as an organic development, as is held by Radhakrishnan—than if it were to be an independent method of comparing dead doctrines with dead doctrines, in mutual isolation. One of the most daring reinterpretations which Radhakrishnan attempts by this double criterion is that of Buddha and his doctrines. Speaking about Buddha he says:

For a revelation of the struggles of the spirit and the experiences of the soul, Buddha had ready to hand that supreme work of the Indian genius, the Upanishads. Early Buddhism is not an absolutely original doctrine. It is no freak in the evolution of Indian thought. Buddha did not break away completely from the spiritual ideas of his age and country.<sup>53</sup>

He goes on to argue in length that "early Buddhism" is only a restatement of the thought of the Upanishads from a new standpoint."<sup>54</sup> It is clear that Radhakrishnan is following a trend of interpretation established by Bhandarkar, Stcherbatsky, Oldenberg and Bloomfield, though he goes further. Both Bhandarkar and Stcherbatsky think that "Upanishadic speculation may in a sense be regarded as having prepared the way for the peculiar teaching of Buddhism."<sup>55</sup> Oldenberg and Bloomfield suggest that both the Upanishads and Buddha's teachings are expressions of the same Indian mind; hence the general resemblance between the two.<sup>56</sup> Prof. Hiriyanna observes: "often Buddha simply carried to their logical conclusions tendencies which we discover already in the Upanishads."<sup>57</sup> On any reckoning Radhakrishnan has done a remarkably ingenious

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 674 (Appendix).

<sup>53</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 360.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 361.

<sup>55</sup> Bhandarkar, *Peep into the Early History of India*, p. 361; Stcherbatsky, *Central Conception of Buddhism*, pp. 68-69. referred to by M. Hiriyanna, *Op. Cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>56</sup> Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, pp. 2-3; Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 53.

<sup>57</sup> M. Hiriyanna, *Op. Cit.*, p. 135.



artistic job of reconstructing Buddha the man and philosopher, taking into account the "difficulty that we do not possess any written records of Buddha's teachings."<sup>58</sup> For instance, Buddha's celebrated silence on questions relating to Ultimate Reality,<sup>59</sup> which has always led scholars to think that he was an agnostic, is re-interpreted by Radhakrishnan in a most positive way so as to make it look like a mark of nothing but his transcendent faith. However, in Radhakrishnan's method of re-interpretation there is rather too much free imagination to serve the interests of critical accuracy. Although it can be maintained, as the scholars mentioned above do maintain, that Buddhism "shares with Brahmanism its dominant religious ideas",<sup>60</sup> it still cannot be denied that Buddhism's practical reforms, "concerning both doctrine and life, are in good part directed against Brahmanism."<sup>61</sup> To quote Prof. Hiriyanna: "Thus, the whole tenor of the early Upanishads is against belief in a personal God; Buddha dismisses that conception altogether. Again according to many statements in them, the self is too negatively conceived—as devoid of all attributes; Buddha eliminates the conception of self altogether."<sup>62</sup>

Thus, need it be said that Radhakrishnan's way of searching for philosophy in its history, being a highly imaginative enterprise, involves great dangers?<sup>63</sup> It is quite apparent that Radhakrishnan often succumbs to the temptation to be led away by his own criterion, treading too heavily on uncertain ground at times, when he would have done well to be wary. He transforms the concept of organic growth of thought, unknowingly perhaps, into a rigid concept of uniform growth, so that ultimately we encounter the rather unconvincing procedure of making all the philosophers of ancient India look alike and say the same thing. Reconstruction of the philosophers of the past in terms of the whole setting of their lives, and in terms of the

<sup>58</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 677 (Appendix).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. A. B. Keith's opinion, "It is quite legitimate to hold that Buddha was a genuine agnostic"—*Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 63.

<sup>60</sup> Bloomfield, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Hiriyanna, *Op. Cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>63</sup> Yet Prof. T. R. V. Murti would adopt Radhakrishnan's line, at least as far as the Mādhyamika School of Buddhism is concerned. See his, *The Central Philosopher of Buddhism*, p. 14.

organic growth of philosophy need not result in the curtailment of their individuality and uniqueness as thinkers, factors which Radhakrishnan himself would insist are quite important. For instance, when he speaks of Buddha, saying that he was a *Brahmabhūta* (that is, one who has become Brahman) that "he adopted an absolutist view of Ultimate Reality,"<sup>64</sup> etc. his conjecture is daring, but on any objective showing, rather questionable. It is a doubtful application of apriorism.

But despite the errors to which it sometimes leads, the method of studying the history of philosophy adopted by Radhakrishnan, which we might, not inappropriately, describe as the "personal-encounter method", is valid and richly fruitful, in that he has succeeded in making the ancient philosophers of India instead of ghostly characters, a living "pantheon of God-like figures",<sup>65</sup> with whom we can commune in a person to person way. Radhakrishnan's method of studying the history of Indian Philosophy could be well and aptly described in the following words, which we have borrowed from a certain writer:

He (who discovers philosophy in its history) has to begin to think with him whom he discovers, not about him, and he is being judged by that, which he is trying to "size up". In this dialogue the philosopher comes to life. History of philosophy is philosophizing itself, is philosophy, actual and existential. Otherwise as object science it would be nothing but a collection of meaningless opinions.<sup>66</sup>

But Radhakrishnan also reminds one of the dangerous nature of this kind of study of the history of philosophy that the same writer warns us of.<sup>67</sup> Both Plato and Hegel knew that the proper way to study the thought of another is through dialectic, or to put it in simple words, through conversation with that another by constant exchange and re-exchange of positions till an identity of views is obtained. This method is not unknown in the Indian tradition also. The Upanishads themselves and the *Bhagavadgītā* exemplify this dialectical, or more aptly, dialogical, manner of proceeding towards the discovery of truth. As one who has

<sup>64</sup> P. V. Bapat, *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Foreword by Radhakrishnan, p. xi.

<sup>65</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>66</sup> Gustave Mueller, *Dialectic*, p. 20.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20.

subjected himself diligently to the disciplines of both Plato and Hegel, and to the Indian traditions, it is understandable that Radhakrishnan has developed a dialectical method of dealing with the philosophical figures of the past.

Personal encounter with the philosophers of the past is not to objectively establish the truth about their views, which is only of secondary importance, but to see if they offer us a plane for our own philosophical existence. While we "experiment" with them, we experiment with our own existence. The writer whose words we quoted above says again:

Philosophy and philosophical existence are inseparable, because, unlike the scientist, the philosopher experiments with existence. Socrates' existence was to Plato what an object-experiment is to the scientist. The verification of philosophy consists in the possibility whether or not your own existence is possible in the world revealed through it.<sup>48</sup>

It is possible for us to choose philosophers of the past, those whom we have neither seen nor heard, as objects of our philosophical experiment. By making use of the traditions about them and whatever material we may happen to have that will give us an adequate idea of their philosophy and philosophical personality, we can bring them back to life and enter into a dialogue with them. By this dialogue our own philosophical standpoint becomes more and more clearly defined. We become philosophers.

In truth all philosophy is the result of such dialogue; in other words, all philosophy originates dialectically. Yet it must not be forgotten that dialogue is a two-way relation. One gains only to the extent one contributes, one does not approach the history of philosophy like a *tabula rasa*. It would be an inductive fallacy to think that one can discover philosophy in its history without previously having had a philosophy. Yet it would be equally fallacious, and a very serious breach of the rules of dialectics, to foist our preconceived philosophy upon what we professedly discover in history. This latter is the bane of most Marxist interpretations of the development of philosophical thought. Not only the Marxists, but many others with a so-called "systematic approach" lend themselves to the same error. As we have indicated above, Radhakrishnan himself is not wholly innocent of this fault.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

We must distinguish between dialectic in the sense of "dialogical", which is undoubtedly its original meaning, and dialectic in the currently popular sense of the term. We use it here only in the first sense. For us it means, not the relation between unknown quantities or "classes", which existed in the past, but a living relation of the present—though the dialogue is with the personalities of the past—so that the philosopher, who is undertaking the study of the past, is himself a term in that relation. To use Martin Buber's famous phrase, it is an "I-Thou" relation, not an I-It relation, or an It-It relation. The other term in this dialectical or dialogical relation is also always personal. Admittedly, Radhakrishnan has not used these very terms, which we are employing here, to describe his method. But one thing is clear and indisputable: he has made use of a method which cannot be characterized equally well by any other terms. We are only making explicit what is implicit in his procedure, giving it a name that fits.

#### *Is there Progress in Indian Philosophy ?*

The problem as to whether there is progress in Indian philosophy or whether there should be progress is cognate with the problem as to what philosophy is in its history. This is a live issue in philosophical circles in India today.<sup>60</sup> Before we come to Radhakrishnan, we shall mention a few of the answers that are usually given. On the one hand, the answer of the orthodox and the neo-orthodox schools is that all truth is found in what is already written and nothing more can be added to it. For them, the concept of progress is not germane to the corpus of "revealed" truth and, therefore, not possible to be regarded as intrinsic to it. As such, it is also not permissible to introduce anew "progressive thinking" into Indian Philosophy. Writes Professor G. R. Malkani:

Indian Philosophy is not progressive, just because the types of religious life, out of which it grew, are fixed and cannot be

<sup>60</sup> This was one of the most hotly debated subjects in the session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, held at Annamalai University in December, 1956. Read two articles in *The Philosophical Quarterly* of January, 1957, Vol. XXIX, No. 4: one entitled "Towards Re-orienting Indian Philosophy", by Richard V. De Smet; the other entitled "Does Indian Philosophy Need Re-orientation ?" by Narsingh Narain.

multiplied indefinitely. European Philosophy in comparison is progressive, because philosophy is conceived as a purely theoretical activity that must satisfy the intellect, but that has no necessary or intrinsic connection to religion or life.<sup>70</sup>

Professor Malkani contends that the test for value to be applied to Indian Philosophy is not that of progress but something different.

There is only one test of a system of thought modern or ancient—does it dissolve our ultimate doubts, and make life in the truth possible? It is not unlikely that we may have to revise our opinion of Indian Philosophy, stagnant though it may be, if we search within it for the key to the highest form of living truth.<sup>71</sup>

At the opposite extreme is the school of the ultra-progressives, who argue that because Indian Philosophy is a body of static and antiquated ideas, it will be well to lay it aside altogether and adopt scientific modes of thought.

Between these two extremes are those who stand for "re-orientation" of Indian Philosophy. Among those who advocate reorientation, some wish to use the categories and terms of Indian Philosophy as the ground-work to build a new edifice upon, by filling them with new meanings and significations. A philosophy so formed, however, could hardly be called Indian, and the resistance to it can be appreciated. Others proceed by making a selection of the ideas in Indian Philosophy and orienting them towards an extrinsic end, an end that is brought in from outside its natural scope. The Marxists and the Thomists, among others, are busy doing this in their respective ways. But, apart from the fact that the organizing principles and the ends towards which the orientation is made are alien and not intrinsically developed from within the system of ideas present in any branch of Indian Philosophy, they ignore the historical reality of the situation, namely that the ideas they incline to select are actually the dead or inert ones with no cognizable influence in philosophical thinking today in the country, while what they judge

<sup>70</sup> "Philosophical Truth", (Address of the General President to the Indian Philosophical Congress, XXIV Session, Patna, 1949, p. 201).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202.

to be defunct or peripheral happen in fact to be the living and central ideas. This factor acts as a drawback in all this type of thinking. It becomes more apparent in philosophical thought inspired by Marxism than in the other ones. Marxist writers—Mr. M. N. Roy, for example—who are bent on “reorienting” Indian Philosophy, try to dig out bits of materialist ideas of the Chārvākas and others, long since buried under the ground, and to rehabilitate them as the really valuable elements of the Indian philosophical heritage, with which a new philosophy is to be forged.<sup>72</sup> Undoubtedly, to unlock ideas that have been long buried in the deep vaults of history, and to bring them to light is a wholly laudable enterprise. But how such excavated ideas, even granting that they have not changed their shape under the artful strokes of the excavator’s spade—or pen,—can help in the reorienting of living Indian Philosophy passes one’s comprehension. Perhaps if our ancient materialism can be proved to have a distinctive quality, that materialisms elsewhere do not have, and a unique message, then we might concede that it can be profitably employed in the reshaping of our thought. But no one has troubled to show that this is the case. It is as if one wants to prove that Indians too have had a materialistic philosophy, and that all good philosophy is materialistic. The purpose in going through all this labour seems to be apologetic, that is, to seek confirmation of the philosophical doctrines that these apologists subscribe to, by the principle of *testimonium universalis*, and point to the beginnings, despite its stunted growth, of a philosophy on the Indian soil, that allegedly bears out the philosophical dogmas in which they believe, as a kind of *preparatio evangelica*.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Mr. M. N. Roy’s Essay, “Radhakrishnan in the Perspective of Indian Philosophy” contributed to P. A. Schilpp’s, *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, is a unique example of a ludicrous attempt to give materialist reorientation to Indian Philosophy.

<sup>73</sup> Mr. M. N. Roy writes: “The long process of the development of naturalist, rationalist, sceptic, agnostic and materialist thought in ancient India found its culmination in the Charvaka system of philosophy, which can be compared with Greek empiricism, and as such is to be appreciated as the positive outcome of the intellectual culture of ancient India.”—P. A. Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 562.

Prof. Richard De Smet, the Thomist, selects not the dead ideas of Indian Philosophy, but the living ones. However, he uses them for his Thomist theological ends. For instance, discussing the doctrine of *pramāṇa* (revealed know-

There are yet some other contemporary Indian thinkers who, while they cannot be classed along with the spokesmen of reorientation, nevertheless advocate progress. They are different from all those philosophers mentioned before in that they insist that progress does not imply introduction of innovations but only addition to the traditional systems of thought of the elements that are lacking in them. Their view is not that the existing nucleus is unwholesome but that it needs completion. They want to lift the present ramparts of Indian Philosophy, lengthen the cords of its tent so as to pitch it wider, and strengthen its stakes, with the result, that when it comes to the traditional philosophy, far from opposing it, they are found to be whole-hearted supporters of it. The following quotation will outline their position: "Originality lies in the discovery of new methods of approach to our problems, and also in the application of some old methods or principles to some new problems. There is large scope for the latter kind of work in India because our ancient philosophers left out such work, which may be done now. For this purpose, the underlying principles of our philosophy should be definitely grasped. The direction of our ancient thought should be carefully noted."<sup>74</sup>

These lines quoted are from Prof. P. T. Raju. Prof. Raju visualizes "a break with tradition" "to a certain extent" in this procedure, but not a complete break. This path will, however, involve less dependence on the ancient texts.<sup>75</sup> "Respect for tradition," he declares, "may be cultivated only so long as it does not become an impediment to progress."<sup>76</sup> But he also says that Indian tradition itself being one that has always encouraged progress, introduction of new ways of thinking would not in fact involve any break with tradition, but would only confirm its character.

He answers the question why we need progress in philosophy. "The modern philosopher is forcibly dragged into the current of

ledge), he writes, "Though found in a somewhat exaggerated form in Sankara and other Advaitins, this admission is itself extremely valuable and will help us to avoid rationalistic pride and to remain open to the possibility of an infallible revelation." Prof. De Smet gives twelve suggestions as to how "to revive valuable doctrines of the past" and "to discover 'the Perennial Philosophy' inherent in this (Indian) heritage"—*Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, January, 1957, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, p. 240.

<sup>74</sup> P. T. Raju, *Idealistic Thought of India*, p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.

social life, in which politics and economics are playing more and more important roles. He can hardly remain a passive spectator of it now."<sup>77</sup> How do we get moral and social philosophies? "...When the metaphysical principle is reflected in our moral and social experience,"<sup>78</sup> answers he.

*What is Radhakrishnan's View of Progress in Philosophy?*

Broadly speaking Radhakrishnan's view can be said to be the same as what we have described immediately above, with some significant differences, which we shall discuss, shortly. Prof. Raju is partly right when he writes about Radhakrishnan's position in the following manner: "One may clinch the point thus: either Radhakrishnan should say with the traditionalists that India's Philosophy is sufficient in itself or that it is incomplete and needs transformation, application and expansion in those directions and to those fields of experience not covered by our ancient systematic philosophers."<sup>79</sup> And he adds, "I believe that Radhakrishnan would accept the second alternative."

Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that the awareness that traditional Indian Philosophy is pregnant with perennial truth—which awareness he himself shares—should by no means give cause to its protagonists to be found fighting against the march of time. The very changes implied in the patterns of culture and in the trends of thought outside the field of philosophy proper, are to be fully understood and rightly directed. He exhorts the orthodox representatives of Indian Philosophy thus:

The scriptures of an earlier age cannot answer the problems of our time. The great representatives of Indian culture were men of mobility and ceaseless adventure, and we are not loyal to their spirit if we mark time in a world of perpetual movement by sitting still and chanting ancient hymns. We cannot command the sun to stand still on the plains of Hindustan.<sup>80</sup>

Though this exhortation rings with the tones of election campaign speeches, rather than with those of philosophy, it

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>79</sup> P. T. Raju, "Radhakrishnan's Influence on Indian Thought," Article contributed to P. A. Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 523.

<sup>80</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 55.



reveals a deeper aspect of his position than is at first apparent. On the outside it would seem to be a polite manner of asking traditional philosophers to kindly get out of the way and not be a hindrance to the progress of thought. Or it might seem that Radhakrishnan is reflecting a peculiar cultural situation in India where even efforts towards advancement in thought must bear the imprimatur of traditional philosophy, a situation which necessitates a certain amount of legalistic pleading to get that stamp of approval, before we launch out on any scheme of thought calculated to bring about progress. It is neither of these. Radhakrishnan does not look upon progress as an end in itself, though he roundly censures those "who profess to be votaries of truth" while "they understood by it merely the pious sophistries of the sacrosanct hair-splittings of this or that school of dogmatics".<sup>81</sup> He tells Indian philosophers that, "instead of resting content with the foundations nobly laid in the past", they should build a greater edifice in harmony with "ancient endeavour" as well as with "modern outlook".<sup>82</sup>

We must point out, however, that there is a certain fallacy to which thinkers of this group—people like Professor Raju to a greater extent, and Radhakrishnan to a lesser extent—lend themselves unwittingly. There are indeed two ways in which we can define the function of philosophy vis-a-vis culture. (1) As infusing content into culture and guiding and directing its development; (2) as merely giving form to the content that has been poured into culture through other channels, as expressing and articulating culture, as making explicit what is implicit in culture. When contemporary writers complain of certain lacunae in Indian Philosophy it is not clear which of these two functions of philosophy they have in mind. If they feel that the want is in respect of the first, then it is tantamount to holding that a philosophy must be capable of supplying every content that a culture needs. That means philosophy is visualized as total. In that case, the gap in Indian Philosophy, far from being a matter for regret, must be welcomed as highly advantageous, because no philosophy should become total. On the other hand, if it is felt that the lack is in terms of the second function, then we might ask, what need is there for a philosophy to become a complete system, or system of systems, which has principles and categories adequate for the

<sup>81</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 771.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 768.

purpose of giving form and expression to every possible content of culture? In fact it is perfectly legitimate for a philosophy to negatively legislate about certain specific contents of culture or forms of experience, and rule them out as not meriting further investigation, so long as without them that philosophy can give a vision that has a "completeness" within itself.<sup>83</sup> Also, the a priori principles in terms of which it makes the ruling as to what is fit for its consideration and what is not fit must be consistent with the vision it gives.

In fact, a philosophy may very well choose to restrict itself to its own selected field of experience and chosen universe of discourse, which alone in the eyes of that philosophy have validity. We can no more impugn it than wish it to expand its universe. One is almost tempted to think that it is the polarity between contrary points of view as to what philosophy should be about and the contrary visions that they offer that makes the philosophical enterprise meaningful in the end. Professor Raju asks, why was it necessary for Indian philosophers to make philosophy into *mokṣasāstra*, the science of salvation, and why is it that Sankara and his followers say "that cosmologies are only conventions not to be taken too seriously"?<sup>84</sup> He adds "it is only through cosmologies that we develop a categorical scheme for the world of pluralities including the social." When one realizes, as professor Raju obviously does, that it is not due to neglect or want of sufficient attention, but as a necessary implicate of the main trends of their thought, that Indian philosophers have left out those fields of experience that are mentioned above, one would not ask this question. No philosophy can be expected to encourage developments that are contrary to its fundamental spirit.<sup>85</sup> An apt sentence from the schoolman Madhusūdana

<sup>83</sup> Professor W. T. Stace in his book, *Time and Eternity*, argues, and very correctly, that the distinctive uniqueness of religion and naturalism is that they give visions that are contrary to each other, from contrary worlds of experience. "The first is the vision of the world as moral and divine order, governed in the end by spiritual forces. The second, which is derived from science, but is not itself part of any science, is the vision of the world as completely governed by blind natural forces and laws, which are wholly indifferent to moral and spiritual ideals"—p. v (Preface).

<sup>84</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 523.

<sup>85</sup> S. K. Maitra in his book, *The Spirit of Indian Philosophy*, discussing the distinctive feature of Indian Philosophy, says, "Philosophy for us is Moksa-

Sarasvati, quoted by Radhakrishnan, would clarify what the essential spirit of Indian Philosophy is. "The ultimate scope of all the *munis*, authors of these different systems, is to support the theory of *māyā*, and their only design is to establish the existence of one supreme God, the sole essence, for these *munis* could not be mistaken, since they were omniscient."<sup>86</sup>

If Indian Philosophy has not supplied criteria by which to explain and formulate the left-out aspects of our experiences, we are free to utilize—and many are already utilizing—other philosophies that are found adequate to the task. A philosophy is not something to which one is expected to swear allegiance, and in favour of which one is supposed to renounce all categories that do not belong to it, with the proviso perhaps that they may be used if they are first baptized into its tradition and made part of it. If Indian Philosophy has taken the view that its only aim is salvation and that the realms of nature, society, etc. are to be ultimately regarded as illusory (*māyā*), having a mandate only so long as ignorance (*avidyā*) lasts, we cannot change the state of affairs as far as that philosophy itself is concerned, but can only exercise our personal choice as thinkers, whether to accept this condition or to reject it. For the universe of discourse of Indian Philosophy comes to us as historically determined, and is thoroughly consistent within itself. One who refuses to abide by this restrictive legislation of Indian Philosophy can philosophize, if he so chooses, both within the Indian tradition and without. It is only a matter for his personal, intellectual integrity, and for the consistency of his thought, that the visions gained inside and outside the tradition are reconciled in some way. It becomes an existential problem for *him*. The philosophy he produces as a result of the dialogue within himself, as the holder of two alternate visions, is *his* philosophy. He may or may not be able to overcome the contradictions that result from holding two different visions. In either case his philosophy becomes a confession and it has a highly personal significance. Radhakrishnan declares that his philosophy is such a confession. "My own writings," he says, "are no more than fragments of a confession."<sup>87</sup> "Fragments of a Con-

sastra, the science of salvation" p. 3. Such is also the unanimous verdict of all Indian philosophical writers, both ancient and modern.

<sup>86</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 48.

<sup>87</sup> "Fragments of A Confession," in P. A. Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 5.

fession" is also the sub-title he has given to his long autobiographical essay contributed to the volume on his philosophy edited by Professor Schilpp.

Now to return to Radhakrishnan and to the question as to what manner of progress according to him there is or there should be in Indian Philosophy, we know that our philosopher speaks with two voices. Professor Raju also observes, "In Radhakrishnan's philosophy two lines of thought are discernible: one assuming the self-sufficiency and self-completeness of Indian thought, and the other assuming its incompleteness and exhibiting a desire to incorporate elements from Western thought."<sup>88</sup> Surely there is a juxtaposition in Radhakrishnan's thought in this respect, but we cannot agree that Prof. Raju's presentation of the nature of this juxtaposition is a correct one. On the contrary, in our view there is a co-existence of two conceptions of progress, the difference between which being so subtle that there is in Radhakrishnan's mind itself a certain amount of alternation, confusion and lack of clearness. One of these has just been outlined—that which Professor Raju holds—according to which progress means filling up the lacunae without involving a departure from the essentials of the traditional doctrines. The other is in a more specific sense Radhakrishnan's own conception, which is often missed both by his admirers and critics alike. We might say that in actuality it is an extension of Radhakrishnan's method of discovering philosophy in its history. We shall outline it briefly below; but a quotation from his writings, which is pregnant with relevant ideas, will illustrate what we have got to say.

Human minds do not throw up sudden stray thoughts without precedents or ancestors: History is continuity and advance. There is no such thing as utterly spontaneous generation. Philosophic experiments of the past have entered into the living minds of the present. Tradition links generation one with another and all progress is animated by ideas which it seems to supersede. The debt we owe to our spiritual ancestors is to study them. Traditional continuity is not mechanical reproduction; it is creative transformation, an increasing approximation to the ideal of truth. Life goes on not by

<sup>88</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 522-23.

reproducing the past but by accepting it and by weaving it into the future in which the past undergoes a rebirth. The main thing is to remember and create anew. Confucius said: "He who by re-animating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher."<sup>89</sup>

This passage gathers up and brings into focus much of what he has written on the subject in many scattered and sundry places. We can spell out his ideas in this wise:

(1) Progress in philosophy is in continuity with tradition. This is the place for discussing—we do not however propose to do it in detail—one aspect of Radhakrishnan's notion of history or *development*, which is remarkably similar to Whitehead's organismic notion of history. The organismic idea of development is certainly like the dialectical one in the Hegelian sense; but with this important difference: the direction of development according to the organismic theory is turned inwards, it is an *ingression*, rather than a progression. There is no novelty that is not a product of this inward moving, ingressive development. Discussing this particular aspect of Whitehead's philosophy, Radhakrishnan himself remarks, "The flow of events is a process in which all the past is gathered up and borne along by the current into the present and the future."<sup>90</sup> Radhakrishnan's notion of progress in philosophy is exactly the same as his notion of progress in general, according to which the essence of development consists not so much in progression as in ingression. It is the selective differentiation and transformation of something within the framework of the unchangeable, organic whole. Corollary to this main principle, we can state two more subsidiary ones: (a) Progress being internal, the movement pertaining to it is always within the structural limits of a given reality and not from within outwards. (b) There can be no increase in the total content of truth in that reality. In respect of Indian philosophy as standing for such a reality here, it would mean firstly, that all the shifts in emphasis and movements of expansion that progress implies are operative only within its historic boundaries and secondly, that, in so far as it claims to be full in itself and to contain the whole wealth of the perennial philosophy no substantial addition to it can ever be made. But there can be change

<sup>89</sup> "Fragments of A Confession" in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 10.    <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

of expression—and there ought to be that—which means not only change in language, but also in form and in the means of communication with each age.

(2) Progress in philosophy is in the form of rebirth of the past. This conception, again, relates to all kinds of progress; but it is in a very special sense applicable to the realm of philosophy. Rebirth of the past means creative transformation of it. This, however, does not involve the sanctification of old times or the glorification of ancient doctrines, because it is conceived of as the dynamic regeneration of the truth which the past in its concrete wholeness enshrines and also transmits to the present. Besides, the past is not the strictly temporal past, but so to say, the eternal, living past, or to put it paradoxically, the past which is always present.<sup>91</sup> It is the bearer and the vehicle as well as the integral concreteness of the whole of the dynamic tradition. The continuous rebirth of the past taking place in this way is essential so as to prevent the present from being isolated and rendered out-of-date. Rebirth of the past means creative repetition. Radhakrishnan describes it as the weaving of new patterns "into the stuff of repetitive energy"<sup>92</sup> and as "the penetration of successiveness by the Eternal".<sup>93</sup>

Such in brief compass is Radhakrishnan's original idea of progress in philosophy; but this idea, as we have already mentioned, exists in unconscious juxtaposition, in his mind, with the other, and more common, idea, of progress, namely, that which stands for the incorporation of new elements into the existing framework of Indian Philosophy.

### 3. RADHAKRISHNAN AS PHILOSOPHER OF RELIGION

#### *Connection between Philosophy of Religion, Comparative Philosophy and History of Philosophy.*

In terms of Radhakrishnan's thought, there is an unbreakable relation between being a Philosopher of Religion, and being a Comparative Philosopher or being a Historian of Philosophy. The following reasons explain that relation: (i) As we have indi-

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Paul Tillich's idea of "the presence of past in the present" being essential to the very nature of history.

<sup>92</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 33.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

cated earlier, the purpose of Comparative Philosophy is, (a) to secure the vision of the perennial philosophy and (b) to utilize such a vision for the practical purpose of solving the problems of mankind arising from the conflict of cultures. We have also suggested that religion is of practical importance because it is regarded as the repository of perennial wisdom. (ii) Again, the perennial philosophy is not a new discovery, but only a re-discovery, by means of the right kind of historical study, of something that is eternal and unchanging, and is preserved in the accumulated wisdom of mankind. Let us elaborate the above.

(i)-(a) The world needs a new vision. It is the task of philosophy to give it. The world's vision, as it is, is a divided one. The insights of religion are alone adequate to bring about a unified vision. "The present vision of the world is an archaic vision"<sup>94</sup> and it reflects the confusion of our times. We have to substitute it by a perennial vision, a vision that is not subject to the changes and chances of time and to the passing moods, viz. by the vision of the prophet souls, which is "seeing the present so fully as to foresee the future".<sup>95</sup> This only religion can give us, because "it is through that we unveil the deepest layers of man's being and get into enduring contact with them."<sup>96</sup> This perennial vision of the world and nothing else can help "our wandering generation to fashion a goal for itself".<sup>97</sup> The remarkable passage quoted below expresses the idea well:

*The Bhagavadgītā* tells us that the trained understanding is not distracted by details or divided in aims. It has a sense of the whole, an integrity of life, a stable anchorage which helps to face the gravest crises. It is the function of philosophy to provide us with a spiritual rallying centre, a synoptic vision as Plato loved to call it, a samanvaya as the Hindu thinkers put it—a philosophy which serves as a spiritual concordat, which will free the spirit of religion from the disintegration of doubt and make the warfare of creeds and sects a thing of the past.<sup>98</sup>

(b) Now, for the practical task of fostering unity between cultures we have to gain an understanding of the philosophies that lie behind them. For, "the present state of the world is

<sup>94</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 48.

<sup>95</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 51.

<sup>97</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 51.

<sup>96</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 21.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83.

largely conditioned by the philosophies that have been worked out by them."<sup>99</sup> Moreover, "in dealing with any social organization we must inquire into the essential ideas on which it is founded, the conception of life which inspires it and the forms which these ideas of life assume."<sup>100</sup> But in order to truly "penetrate to the heart of a civilization we ought to study its deepest springs of thought, its religious ideas,"<sup>101</sup> for they enshrine the deepest of all philosophical ideas of a people and the profoundest of their motivating forces. It is right to maintain this, because religion "is the supreme achievement of man's profound experience. It is the deepest kind of life, reflecting the different phases, complex and conflicting, of human living".<sup>102</sup>

(ii) The Perennial philosophy is the philosophy of ultimate religion, not of this or that religion, but of religion as such, of religion as conceived in the most general way. History of Indian Philosophy, Radhakrishnan believes, is the history of universal and spiritual religion. "Philosophy in India," he writes, "is essentially spiritual."<sup>103</sup> He believes that perennial spiritual wisdom is the distinguishing mark of Indian philosophy as also of Indian culture. For "it is the intense spirituality of India," he observes, "and not any great political structure or social organization that it has developed, that has enabled her to withstand the ravages of time and the accidents of history."<sup>104</sup> "The history of Indian thought," he avers, "illustrates the endless (perennial, spiritual) quest of the mind, ever old and ever new."<sup>105</sup>

The ultimate truths of Philosophy and Religion are the same, for "the ultimate truths are truths of spirit and in the light of them actual life has to be defined".<sup>106</sup> This accounts for the well-known fact that in India Philosophy and Religion have never been considered as two distinct enterprises. "To those who realize the true kinship between life and theory, philosophy becomes a way of life, an approach to spiritual realization."<sup>107</sup> As far as India is concerned this identity between Religion and Philosophy, far from being harmful, has been highly advantageous for the simple reason that "religion in India is not dog-

<sup>99</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 351.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>103</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I. p. 24.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.



matic".<sup>108</sup> "There has been no teaching, not even the Sāṅkhya, which remained a mere word of mouth or dogma of schools."<sup>109</sup>

Radhakrishnan has discovered the ultimate truth of Philosophy and of Religion in the history of Indian Philosophy. The new vision to which he points in terms of these is not actually a "new" vision but the perennial vision. He is existentially bound to the history of Indian Philosophy, in fact to all philosophy that stands for the perennial truths. Accordingly, he disclaims that he has come as a "prophet", "who sets forth some new-fangled paradox."<sup>110</sup> He merely attempts to present a point of view "which constitutes the very essence of the great philosophic tradition of idealism."<sup>111</sup>

*To What Extent can an Exponent of the Perennial Philosophy be Original?*

As an exponent of the perennial philosophy Radhakrishnan's freedom to be original is comprehended within the framework of his two-fold loyalty to the tradition of Indian Philosophy and to the great idealistic tradition of the world, wherever it is to be found. The most articulate expression of his version of the perennial philosophy is given in his *An Idealist View of Life*. Yet this same "idealist view" pervades all his writings, for instance, a work in Comparative Philosophy, like *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* and a historical work like *Indian Philosophy*. Creative originality has to be of a special kind in a situation where progress is conceived in terms of rebirth of the past and geared to the perennial vision resulting from comparative study. That means originality consists, on the one hand, not so much in "the underlying ideas," as in "the manner in which they have been presented for our times,"<sup>112</sup> and on the other hand, in "the way in which one weaves" the concepts gleaned from various sources "into a philosophical and theological theory."<sup>113</sup> The last mentioned quality refers to the art of creating a synthetic philosophic structure which is fluid and plastic rather than hard and rigid. This is an art requiring great skill, and Radhakrishnan is a master of it. This is where his originality comes in. It is

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>110</sup> *My Search For Truth* (Off-print), p. 31, quoted by D. M. Datta in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 678.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p. 678.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, p. 148.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 678.

evidenced by "the fluidity of the basic concepts and the flexibility of the structure secured with the help of pliable connections".<sup>114</sup>

Mr. Bernard Phillips' remark in this connection is worth quoting:

It was Charles Peirce who made the observation that in the matter of fundamental conceptions, originality is the least of recommendations, and the great propounders of the perennial philosophy have ever regarded themselves not as innovators but as rediscovering the way which had been temporarily lost.<sup>115</sup>

And he commends Radhakrishnan very rightly when he says, "Radhakrishnan's high merit lies in his great ability to present this ancient doctrine in its essential purity, freed from the obscuring partisan details which have so often attached themselves to it."<sup>116</sup>

#### *Religion and the Perennial Philosophy*

Religion in its ultimate essence can be equated with perennial philosophy. But, for this, two indispensable conditions are to be fulfilled. Radhakrishnan is very insistent on them. (i) Religion must be purely spiritual, cleansed of all accidental accretions. (ii) It must be universal.

Dean Inge in an article (contributed to the Schilpp volume on Radhakrishnan), entitled "The Religion of the Spirit," emphasizes the spiritual conception of religion in Radhakrishnan's thought, which makes it identical with the perennial philosophy. The Dean, following Auguste Sabatier, draws a contrast between the religion of authority and the religion of the spirit. He places Radhakrishnan on the "spirit" side of the dividing line. Says the Dean, "He (Radhakrishnan) is in substantial agreement with the great school of religious Platonism, which in Christianity has taken, not without justification, the name of *Philosophia perennis*, the perennial philosophy."<sup>117</sup> Radhakrishnan writes:

We need not adopt the official attitude of the churches to the mystic developments. They may fight furiously about the dogmas of the divinity schools, but the common notions of spiritual religion remain, the plain easy truths, the pure

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, p. 678.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, p. 148.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p. 148.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p. 326.

morals, the inward worship, and the world loyalty... They are the very stuff of truth, however hostile they may seem to the orthodoxes.<sup>118</sup>

Mr. Lawrence Hyde, in an article, under the title "Radhakrishnan's Contribution to Universal Religion" (also contributed to the Schilpp volume), stresses the importance which Radhakrishnan, "like that other eminent exponent of philosophia perennis, the late Ananda Coomaraswamy," attaches to the universal aspect of religion.<sup>119</sup>

Radhakrishnan interprets the *Bhagavadgītā* as a document in universal, spiritual religion, that is to say, as a document in the perennial philosophy. It "represents not any sect of Hinduism, but Hinduism as a whole," he writes, "not merely Hinduism but religion as such, in its universality, without limit of time or space, embracing within its synthesis the whole gamut of the human spirit, from the crude fetishism of the savage to the creative affirmations of the saint."<sup>120</sup> And of the Vedānta he remarks that it "is not a religion, but religion in its most universal and deepest significance."<sup>121</sup> It means that that religion which is to be considered identical with the perennial philosophy is not either external religion or any particular institutional religion, but Religion.

### *The study of Religion*

If religion is understood in its most spiritual and most universal state, it becomes a subject for metaphysical inquiry, for, metaphysics is concerned with pure, authentic experience and universal principles. Radhakrishnan seeks to show that religion has the qualifications to be treated as a fit subject for metaphysical

<sup>118</sup> *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, p. 296.

<sup>119</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 369.

<sup>120</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 12. Radhakrishnan cites Aldous Huxley's opinion to the effect that the *Gītā* is one of the best expositions of the philosophia perennis: "The *Gītā* is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the perennial philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value not only for Indians but for all mankind. . . . The *Bhagavadgītā* is perhaps the most systematic statements of the perennial philosophy."—from the Introduction to *The Bhagavadgītā*, by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (1945), quoted by Radhakrishnan in his *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 12.

<sup>121</sup> *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 23.

investigation, in fact, better qualifications than any other area of experience.

The perennial philosophy is the metaphysics of pure and universal religious experience. Thus, while he concedes that religion constitutes a specialized activity, in its origin it belongs to the unitary ground of all experience and as such in principle comprehends all of them.<sup>122</sup> Radhakrishnan's constructive endeavour is directed towards delineating a metaphysics of religious experience in this manner, which in fact means, delineating the perennial philosophy.

### *Religion and Metaphysics*

If, as Radhakrishnan points out, "Kant's fundamental aim was to lead philosophy into the safe road of science,"<sup>123</sup> his own aim seems to be to lead philosophy of religion into the relatively safe road of metaphysics. "Philosophy of religion," he defines as "religion come to an understanding of itself."<sup>124</sup> He makes a sustained effort to vindicate religious experience as the plane where the realms of essence and existence meet, and as such, as the most indispensable subject-matter for metaphysics, if metaphysics is to be nothing short of a complete theory of reality. And no theory of reality will, however, be complete unless it is a theory of complete reality. What religious experience is capable of revealing is the complete reality, reality as it is. It is not the case that it brings to us merely the highest knowledge of reality that we are capable of gaining. This indeed is the distinguishing mark of the perennial philosophy in contrast to weaker types of religion-oriented idealism. For instance when Bradley says, "There is nothing more real than what comes in religion,"<sup>125</sup> he does not imply the completeness of the reality known, but, on the one hand, the validity of knowing reality through religion, and on the other, religious experience as the upper limit of man's capacity

<sup>122</sup> Radhakrishnan would be in complete agreement with Clement C. J. Webb regarding his observation: "The aspiration after the knowledge of a single ground of all things or of an all-inclusive unity, an aspiration which is the vital principle of philosophy, is the one which has its original and constant stimulus in the hope and promise of its fulfilment which the religious experience supplies." C. C. J. Webb, *Group Theories of Religion*, p. 189. Josiah Royce holds the same view, Cf. *The Problem of Christianity*, p. 118.

<sup>123</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 132.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84.

<sup>125</sup> F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 449.

to know. Radhakrishnan, on the contrary, following the perennial tradition, claims that reality in its fulness can be known through religion.

But of course Radhakrishnan is not under the illusion that every religious experience can give us this kind of knowledge. Complete revelation of complete reality belongs to the ideal possibilities of religion. But there are practical limitations to conjure with. If we were to realize the ideal possibilities of religion as a secure and continuous experience, then there would be no need for a theory of such experience, which the perennial philosophy is, for then "there would be nothing to which our experience will have to cohere or to correspond".<sup>126</sup> Then "all reality will be present in its own immediate validity."<sup>127</sup> But normally "we do not attain an insight permanent and uninterrupted, when reality is present as its own immediate witness," though "we are convinced that such an ideal is not an impossible one."<sup>128</sup> While the vision lasts "we have neither the power nor the desire to analyse it." But when it leaves, "the process of reflection starts."<sup>129</sup> That is how the perennial philosophy takes its birth.

Not only religious experience is "felt to be sufficient and complete" and as such needing not to "look beyond itself for meaning and validity,"<sup>130</sup> it also authenticates and completes every other form of experience. Similarly all philosophy has to find its fulfilment in the perennial philosophy. Any philosophy that does not do that is one that has lost its direction, and will ultimately reach nowhere, even as the inland rivers of Australia, which flow away from the sea and get sucked up in the thirsty sands of the desert, do not reach the great waters. In his *Idealist View*, Radhakrishnan describes the various modern "substitutes for religion," such as "naturalistic atheism," "agnosticism," "scepticism," "humanism," "pragmatism," "modernism", etc. all of which have their source in some authentic springs of human experience, and directed properly, would have run and joined the eternal stream of the perennial philosophy, instead of going astray and ultimately getting lost in the arid sands of negation. But the various species of idealism, such as intuitionism and personalism, and also religious pragmatism belong to a different class, for, they are anenable to being channelled into the high

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, p. 92.

stream of the perennial philosophy. Though in one of his books, *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, he apparently criticizes the phenomenon described by the title, what he actually does is to show how these modern schools of idealism, in which religion "reigns," can be so guided as to be made complete theories of reality, instead of mere theories of religion, such as they are now, of which the main purpose is edification and consolation.

It is as a logical outcome of Radhakrishnan's position that he is opposed to the psychological theories of religion, such as those enunciated by William James, Stancely Hall, Starbuck and Leuba, Coe and Pratt, in all of which "conclusions hostile to the reality of the religious object are asserted, especially by those who are under the influence of the Freudian school".<sup>131</sup> (It must be mentioned that his criticism is largely directed against the Freudians, for he seems to treat a psychological-cum-metaphysical interpreter of religion like William James with considerable deference and respect.) Dean Inge observes rightly, "The perennial philosophy which I think is Radhakrishnan's will make no terms with scepticism, positivism and pragmatism. The affirmations of religion are not merely subjective."<sup>132</sup> Radhakrishnan, in the course of his discussion of the psychological theories of religion, comments: "Psychologists are interested in the discovery of the conditions that lead to the acceptance of fancies as facts but are not interested in their truth value."<sup>133</sup> Psychologists err in not being able to distinguish true religious experiences from illusory ones, and in not being able to detect what lies behind religious experience as such.

#### *Religion and the Unconditioned Reality*

Now we are in a position to gather up all that we have said so far and pinpoint the discussion to the central idea in Radhakrishnan's philosophy. Radhakrishnan interprets the perennial philosophy as a vision, as a synoptic vision, and as an instrument for forging unity and understanding among cultures. But other philosophies than the perennial can claim to be all these. Furthermore, an adequate and satisfying vision of the world, can be supplied even by poetic genius. The vision that we need can be

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>132</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 328.

<sup>133</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 34.

like an artist's vision, with no claim to any objective and ultimate reality behind it. Religion which is the bearer of such vision can itself be interpreted in such a way as not necessarily to imply reality, although it may be shown as an authentic and useful experience. The differentia of Radhakrishnan's thought is expressed as follows: "Religion is, in essence, experience of or living contact with ultimate reality. It is not a subjective phenomenon, nor a mere cultivation of the inner life, but the apprehension of something that stands over against the individual."<sup>134</sup> "Religious experience bears testimony to the reality of something behind the visible."<sup>135</sup> It is not a testimony *that* there is such a reality, but a testimony of full, complete, and immediate contact and acquaintance *with* that reality. Elucidating this point in Radhakrishnan's thought, Bernard Phillips writes:

The heart of the perennial philosophy, which beats in all of the great religions of the world and in many of its philosophical systems, consists of the claim that there is a spiritual Absolute, beyond the power of words to express, which is the ultimate reality underlying the visible world, etc.<sup>136</sup>

Mr. Phillips rightly calls the "spiritual Absolute" by the name of "the Unconditioned,"<sup>137</sup> and he suggestively explains that the purpose of religion is to achieve "the unitive knowledge of the Unconditioned". In the equation between the spiritual Absolute and the Unconditioned two realms—that of religion and philosophy—have met; and it is in the junction between the two that the perennial philosophy takes its stand. The term "Unconditioned" would suggest to any one, by the association of ideas, the name of Kant. The transcendental idealism of Kant and the perennial philosophy part company on the question as to the knowability of the Unconditioned. As against Kant, the perennial philosophy has always maintained, as Dean Inge says, that "the completely real" "is the completely knowable."<sup>138</sup> Any one who has lived after Kant cannot but regard Kant's agnosticism, in view of its tremendous importance for philosophy, and particularly idealism, as a starting point, or as a point of depar-

<sup>134</sup> *The Spirit in Man (in Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 492.

<sup>135</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 85.

<sup>136</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

ture, for a new delineation of the perennial philosophy. We may now consider Radhakrishnan's original attempt—original within the scope that we have already defined—at reconstructing the perennial philosophy from this point. This reconstruction is called, and appropriately, "integral experience".

## II

### RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY AS INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE

It is necessary and legitimate to place Radhakrishnan in the context of modern philosophy. To do so will in no way prejudice his position as a philosopher in the Indian tradition, for in a sense all contemporary Indian philosophers talk in the language not only of traditional but also of modern thought.

Again, it is a fact that in the development of modern philosophy Immanuel Kant has a pivotal role.<sup>139</sup> Several movements in modern thought refer back to him: if not, in all cases, consciously to him as a historical starting point, at least to his analysis of the problem of knowledge as a nodal point in the procedure of thought.<sup>140</sup> Some of these movements have been the outcome, directly or by way of reaction, of the Kantian critique of reason. Among these we can rightly include speculative or absolute idealism, intuitionism and some recent mystical epistemological systems. Likewise, it is the challenge of the Kantian

<sup>139</sup> We recall what James Ward says in his very opening sentence of *A Study of Kant*: "On a broad survey of the history of modern philosophy, it may be safely said that the lonely philosopher of Königsberg occupies the central place"—p. 1; here is what Will Durant says: "As to his influence, the entire philosophic thought of the nineteenth century revolved about his speculations. . . . Philosophy will never again be so naive as in her earlier and simpler days; she must always be different hereafter, and profounder, because Kant lived."—*The Story of Philosophy*, pp. 316-17.

<sup>140</sup> Kant's criticism of reason and his exaltation of feeling, prepared for the voluntarism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the intuitionism of Bergson and the pragmatism of William James; his identification of the laws of thought with the laws of reality gave to Hegel a whole system of philosophy; and his unknowable "thing-in-itself" influenced Spencer more than Spencer knew." Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p. 317.



doctrine of unknowability of the thing-in-itself—regardless of the disputed question as to whether or not Kant thought the thing-in-itself really and objectively existent—that has reactivated the perennial philosophy and has encouraged it to reconstruct its old ideals along new lines. Now we have to see Radhakrishnan's integral experience as one such notable reconstruction of the perennial philosophy, in response to the climate of epistemological agnosticism, in the creation of which the primary factor was Kant's critique of reason. Radhakrishnan is well aware that this philosophical agnosticism regarding ultimate reality will not leave—and it has not left—the field of religion alone. In a way it is at the root of all "modern challenge to religion,"<sup>141</sup> and is productive of all kinds of "substitutes for religion"<sup>142</sup> such as "naturalistic atheism," "agnosticism," "scepticism," "humanism," "pragmatism," "modernism," and "authoritarianism." Now, it is not suggested that all these are natural and logical developments from Kant's thought, but only that the richness of Kant's work was such that diverse and conflicting reactions came out of it. We know that some of these various outcomes are quite contrary to Kant's intent. As Will Durant well puts it: "The fervour of the essay on 'Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason' indicates a sincerity too intense to be questioned, and the attempt to change the base of religion from theology to morals, from creed to conduct could have come only from a profoundly religious mind."<sup>143</sup>

#### THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN THE RECONSTRUCTION

##### *Absolute Idealism, Intuitionism and Mysticism—Their Combination by Radhakrishnan*

It is well known that each of these systems has a history of its own. But speculative idealism is certainly of a more direct lineage from Kant and it has its genesis in him. The basic structural material for it has been taken out of Kant himself. As J. B. Baillie observes,<sup>144</sup> it was "inspired by the promise and potency of the Kantian philosophy" that "Kant's immediate successors

<sup>141</sup> This is the title of Chapter I of *The Idealist View of Life*.

<sup>142</sup> This is the title of Chapter II of *The Idealist View of Life*.

<sup>143</sup> Will Durant, *Op. Cit.*, p. 316.

<sup>144</sup> J. B. Baillie, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind*, Vol. I, p. vi.

made bold to set sail on speculative seas unknown." Finally, Hegel came along and chained speculative imagination "to the solid ground of tried and verifiable experience." Hiralal Halder says that what Hegel did was "to transform Kant's halting idealism into Absolute idealism."<sup>145</sup> This transformation began with the recognition by the absolute idealists of the strange fact "that Kant should have laid such extra-ordinary stress on the reality of the being of things, as a limit to knowledge, and yet that this very reality should have little or no meaning of its own."<sup>146</sup> The difficulty could be removed, it was felt, only by identifying thought and reality. Baillie comments as follows:

The relation of thought to reality cannot any longer mean, when does thinking stop and reality begin?: how is the sphere of thought adjusted to a reality outside itself? The very form of such a question is due to a kind of comparison between thinking on the one side and a real on the other. But such a comparison is itself impossible without thinking, and without an identity containing the factors compared.<sup>147</sup>

Intuitionism is more of an open protest against Kant's agnosticism than a direct development. There have been many forms of intuitionism, but it is Bergson who is known to have raised his voice most strongly in protest against Kant. Bergson agrees with Kant that reality is not knowable by means of the intellect, but he does not agree that there is no other means by which to know reality. For Bergson, reality is life in its onrush, pure duration. The principle of apprehension adequate to it is to be a dynamic one and not static such as the intellect is. "God and freedom and perhaps immortality, which are beyond demonstration by the intellect and its constructions, may be hence quite within the grasp of the *other* way of knowledge. This other way of knowing is intuition, and not postulation of practical reason."<sup>148</sup> Yet, it is true that Kant himself has taught us to use intuition although he did not grasp its full implication for knowledge. As Radhakrishnan points out, "The self-evidencing and underivative character of

<sup>145</sup> Hiralal Halder, *Neo-Hegelianism*, p. 11.

<sup>146</sup> J. B. Baillie, *Idealistic Construction of Experience*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>148</sup> Horace Meyer Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson*, pp. 69-70. Also cf. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (E.T.), pp. 356-63.

intuitions is the lesson of Kant's philosophy, though he was himself not conscious of it."<sup>149</sup>

Now to pass on to mysticism, Rudolf Otto points out, it has always referred to something much deeper than the "pure reason" of Kant, at least as this is usually understood, namely, to what is called the "fundus animae," the "bottom" or "the ground of soul" (Seelengrund).<sup>150</sup> Otto gives a new interpretation to mysticism, basing it on the experience of "the holy," which according to him is an *a priori* category. As such, mysticism acquires a new relevancy for epistemological investigation. Otto takes leave to say that he has cast his work in terms of the Kantian scheme.<sup>151</sup> Hence he has coined the significant term "numinous," to mean "the holy," from the substantive term "numen". He declares that the numinous "issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension." And applying Kant's own dictum, "though all our knowledge begins *with* experience, it by no means follows that all arises *out of* experience," he adds that, in the same way, though the numinous "comes into being in and amid the sensory data and empirical material of the natural world and cannot anticipate or dispense with those, yet it does not arise *out of* them but only by their means."<sup>152</sup> Drawing on the vast mystical literature of the world, he declares:

The facts of the numinous consciousness point therefore—as likewise do also the 'pure concepts of the understanding' of Kant and the ideas and value judgments of ethics or aesthetics—to a hidden substantive source, from which the religious ideas and feelings are formed, which lies in the mind independently of sense experience: a pure reason in the profoundest sense, which because of the surpassingness of its content, must be distinguished from both the pure theoretical and the pure practical reason of Kant, as something yet higher and deeper than they.<sup>153</sup>

Otto asserts not only that reality is known by means of the numinous experience—answering to the noumenal realm of Kant,—but that it is also "wholly other" to the knower. He preserves the transcendence of Kant's notion of the noumenal

<sup>149</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 166.

<sup>150</sup> Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (E.T.), p. 116.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

reality by calling it "wholly other," unlike the speculative idealists who identify thought with reality. At the same time, as it is clear, he refutes Kant's argument that the transcendent reality is unknowable by any means whatsoever. Now, we have stated the theory of Rudolph Otto as representative of mysticism, because it is the most significant and the most pointed that mysticism has so far offered for meeting the agnostic challenge of Kant.

Now these three, absolute idealism, intuitionism and mysticism, are accepted by Radhakrishnan. They form the three elements out of which he constructs his epistemology. There remains for him the task of combining them into a single method of knowledge, and this is what he sets out to achieve. The combination of these three methods is not merely a matter of adjusting them with one another, but one of so welding them together as to make them conform to another standard, namely the method of Advaita Vedanta. So by a process of plastic re-interpretation of these three as well as of the epistemology of Vedanta, he weaves a new pattern of the perennial philosophy. This pattern is designated by the phrase "integral experience". It is conceived as a new method of knowledge adequate to ultimate reality.

Radhakrishnan is a vedantist by conviction. If, for him, the epistemological problem is set by Kant, the solution is given by Vedanta. So there is no question of his proposing an alternative solution to the vedantic. The business that he conceives to be really his is to so interpret Vedanta as to make it responsive to developments in epistemology that in spirit come closest to it. As a vedantist he has himself been so responsive. Thus the method of integral experience is really one of re-interpreting the vedantic method in terms of a combined method of absolute idealism, intuitionism and mysticism, and also vice versa, and finally working out an equation between them.

#### *Advaita Vedanta*

Advaita Vedanta, which indeed springs from an altogether different tradition, has latterly been brought into the picture of current epistemological discussions by some of its modern exponents, whose thought consciously or unconsciously, but quite inevitably, moves along the path of Comparative Philosophy. Apart from the fact that Kant's Copernican revolution in

philosophy has had a tremendous impact upon the whole world of thought, obliging many serious thinkers to take account of Kant in their epistemologies, there is also the additional fact that there exist certain dialectical affinities between Kant's position and that of Advaita Vedanta. It is small wonder, then, that most contemporary interpreters of Vedanta have oriented their thought to Kant.<sup>154</sup> In one way or other they all assume Kant to be the problem-setter and advance Vedanta as the solution.

Such being the case, what is the problem, as the vedantists understand it, and what is the solution? Kant defines reality as a trinity of Ideas—God, Self and the World. Vedanta reduces these to two and finally to one, in terms of the famous formula of Sankara, "Brahman is real, the world is illusory, and the self is the same as Brahman and no other".<sup>155</sup> The world is eliminated and God and the self identified as the Self.

Modern vedantists argue that the real significance of Kant's demonstration of unknowability of the Unconditioned is that he has proved effectively that there is an absolute logical disjunction in the matter of the problem of knowledge, of how knowledge is possible. The disjunction is this:

*Proposition:* Ultimate reality is not self-evident. What is not self-evident cannot be known at all, for nothing but self-evident knowledge has the power to break through the barrier of the antinomies of reason. Therefore reality cannot be proved and as such cannot be known.

*Contra:* Ultimate reality is self-evident, being identical with the knowing subject. Therefore it need not be proved, but is known

<sup>154</sup> The late Professor K. G. Bhattacharya, acknowledged to be one of the most original vedantic thinkers of modern India, explicitly states that he is developing his position by "stating wherein I differ from the Kantian view of the subject (the possibility of philosophy as a body of knowledge)". "The Concept of Philosophy" (in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*), p. 105. Likewise, Professor G. R. Malkani writes his *Vedantic Epistemology* to meet "a demand for theoretical solution for a theoretical problem, which Kant could not meet on his restricted assumptions and limited metaphysical outlook." *Vedantic Epistemology*, p. 4. In the same manner, Professor A. C. Mukerji's book, *The Nature of the Self*, which is a discussion of how knowledge of the Self is attained, is implicitly a comparison of Sankara and Kant.

<sup>155</sup> *Brahma Satyam Jagan mitthya jivo Brahmaiva nāpara.*

and knowable, not indeed as object but subject, being itself the real knower.

Vedantists emphasize that the great value of Kant's work is that it has shown the absolute necessity of self-evidence in knowledge if we are to have a metaphysical theory of reality. This is obviously the reason why Professor K. C. Bhattacharya defines philosophy itself as "self-evident elaboration of the self-evident".<sup>156</sup> The great difficulty in which Kant found himself is, in the opinion of Professor Bhattacharya, due to his "persisting objective attitude", which "in his first critique explains not only his admission of the thing-in-itself and his denial of self-knowledge but also his disbelief in the possibility of a spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason through which self-knowledge may be attainable."<sup>157</sup> It is as a conscious solution to the Kantian problem of knowledge that Bhattacharya develops his metaphysics of the self or subject,<sup>158</sup> where he pleads for a real subjective study of the subject.<sup>159</sup>

It is contended by writers like Bhattacharya that the vedantic solution to the Kantian problem has advantages that other solutions do not have. It is true that in their common opposition to Kant's agnosticism, Vedanta and the other three systems considered go a long way together, and they develop many identical arguments. These other systems would also agree that

<sup>156</sup> *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 109.

<sup>157</sup> K. C. Bhattacharya, *The Subject as Freedom*, p. 37.

<sup>158</sup> It is illuminating to note that among the existentialists Gabriel Marcel shows great similarities to this aspect of Bhattacharya's philosophy. He criticizes Kant for remaining within the sphere of objectivity and himself enters "the sphere of subjectivity" to make metaphysics possible—vide, F. H. Heinemann, *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, p. 137. Marcel says, "There must be a possibility of having an experience of the transcendent as such, and unless that possibility exists the word can have no meaning," Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. 1, p. 46 quoted by F. H. Heinemann, *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, p. 138. However, there is a very crucial difference between existentialism and Vedanta in that in the former all emphasis is laid on the personal individual subject, while in the case of the latter, the emphasis is on the trans-personal. But then there are existentialists who assume a vedantic point of view. For example, Karl Jaspers writes, "My true self is not the individual soul, but the supreme Self, the One; and therefore I reach my authentic being in identifying myself with the One," quoted by Heinemann, *Existentialism*, etc. p. 64.

<sup>159</sup> K. C. Bhattacharya, *The Subject as Freedom*, p. 17.

self-evidence is the necessary character of true knowledge. But Kant could retort that any presumed self-evidence will not in fact free a given method of knowledge from the pervasive conditioning factors, for the "evidence" of self-evidence itself can be called into question. But in the face of this situation, vedantists point out one very important factor in favour of the system they represent. They argue that the absolute demands of the principle of self-evidence favour the choice of the subject conceived as universal for the status of absolute reality. Accordingly, they say that Advaita Vedanta must be regarded as adhering most consistently to the principle of self-evidence, meaning that it is the evidence of the self. Even the "cogito" part of Descartes' "cogito ergo sum" is not really self-evident, for "I think" may be an illusion. But "I am" can never be an illusion. None of the objective idealistic systems, nor any idealism based on the transcendent reality, which allegedly goes beyond the distinctions of subject and object and from which both derive,<sup>160</sup> can lay claim to the support of self-evidence in the way that Advaita Vedanta can. Such is the line adopted by the leading contemporary exponents of Advaita. And there is no question but that here they are being faithful to the implications of the classical doctrine.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN MIND

As is to be expected, Radhakrishnan did not start out with his philosophy of integral experience. This Philosophy developed gradually. The development of the method of knowledge has gone hand in hand with the progress in his understanding of the nature of the human mind. Radhakrishnan started out as a votary of reason, and gradually developed into the spokesman for integral experience.

#### 1. ABSOLUTE IDEALISM

In earlier days, he used to regard himself as an adherent of absolutism or absolute idealism. There is no doubt that of all the Western systems of philosophy that he learnt in his youth he felt the closest kinship with Hegel's system, which is absolute idealism

<sup>160</sup> The leading instance of this is Schelling's philosophy.

or monism. However, this and all other special affinities were controlled by one factor, namely, his conviction that Vedanta is the standard of truth. Even from his youth he was staunch in this conviction. At an early stage in his career he regarded Vedanta as the purest and best form of idealism. Thus when his interest in Hegel's idealistic system was keenly aroused he felt it to be "the nearest approach to the Vedanta, many aspects of which could better be cast into this modern Western mould and displayed to the West both for defence and appreciation".<sup>161</sup> His absolutist standpoint was best expressed in his early work.

*The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*

At a time—four decades ago—when absolutism was being rejected and various kinds of pluralism and realism were gaining ground, Radhakrishnan entered a strong and eloquent plea for the former. *The Reign of Religion* is a study of Leibniz, Ward, Bergson, William James, Eucken, Howison and Russell. In this work he tried to show how even the greatest of some contemporary philosophers—not of course Russell, who seem to be singularly out of place in a state of affairs described by the title—were guided by "religious prepossession" to reject monism in favour of pluralistic and personalistic types of philosophical theories that move away from the absolute, which are philosophies gone astray. The main thesis of the book is contained in the sentence: "It is my opinion that systems which play the game of philosophy squarely and fairly, with freedom from religious prepossession and religious neutrality, naturally end in absolute idealism."<sup>162</sup> Later, however, this absolute idealism was modified into integral experience on the one side and into "a spiritual view of the universe" on the other, which together represent an enriched content of meaning. By absolutism or absolute idealism Radhakrishnan means specifically the monistic idealism,<sup>163</sup> which while bearing general resemblances to Hegelianism manifests a certain distinctiveness, being "based on the philosophy of the Upanishads".<sup>164</sup>

<sup>161</sup> D. M. Datta in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 668.

<sup>162</sup> Professor P. T. Raju, one of the foremost disciples of Radhakrishnan, declares: "Philosophy, if it is to be consistent and thorough in its thinking, cannot but reach the absolute." *Idealist Thought of India*, p. 66.

<sup>163</sup> C. C. J. Webb, in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 386.

<sup>164</sup> D. M. Datta in *Ibid.*, p. 671.



*Revolt against Anti-intellectualism*

The book under review represents a revolt against a revolt, that is to say, revolt against the anti-intellectualist revolt against intellectualism. Radhakrishnan would argue that it is only against certain bad aspects of a particular philosophy that philosophical movements which come after it, revolt. Truths can be found on both sides of the revolt and they must be captured together and thus the systems constructively directed. He discusses the main features of some of these important revolts and avers that they can find their fulfilment only in a true type of absolutism.

*Leibnitz:* Leibnitz reacted against the philosophy of Spinoza, against its "static self-identity," and countered it with a "plurality of self-identities". Thus he is led to the view that the world is a "collection of independent monads". But in order to hold them together he needs a binding force, which confers unity upon the world. For this purpose he adopts the principle of Sufficient Reason "which compels him to resort to the external expedient of a God who has to keep together several centrifugal forces".<sup>165</sup> "But the two," comments Radhakrishnan, "should be viewed as the different phases of a concrete reality. Then the whole world will be an unfolding unity with the monads as its inter-related aspects." He concludes that "this is the truth that Leibnitz's philosophy is struggling to reach" and, summoning Hegel for support, adds that "if read in any other light" it would remain "a metaphysical romance."<sup>166</sup>

*Ward:* As for Ward's philosophy, which is also pluralistic, Radhakrishnan's conclusion is that "the difficulties of pluralism, which Ward tried to meet by the theistic conception are not so met so long as he keeps to the idea of God as a personal creator." "But," he adds, "when he succeeds in meeting them by making God all-comprehensive spirit, his pluralism and theism have vanished."<sup>167</sup>

*Bergson:* Bergson's fight against intellectualism and absolutism is one of the factors that made his philosophy popular. Radhakrishnan argues that despite its well-known anti-absolutist and anti-intellectualist tendencies, "on a closer examination we shall find that Bergson's philosophy is more absolutistic than it is generally known to be." "If freed from its inconsistencies it must

<sup>165</sup> *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 90.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, p. 147.

end in an absolutism of the concrete variety."<sup>168</sup> Radhakrishnan ventures the assertion that, since according to Bergson, there is a "universal principle," which is "spiritual in nature" and in which "all existence is gathered," "the main tendency of Bergson's philosophy is monistic."<sup>169</sup>

### *False Absolutism Versus True Absolutism*

Radhakrishnan arrives at the conclusion that as a result of the various pluralist, anti-intellectualist, vitalist and personalist movements, which have "succeeded in giving a shake to the supremacy of absolutism in religion and philosophy," it is only the "false absolutism that has come down while the true is considerably strengthened."<sup>170</sup> The false absolutism is static, abstract, whereas the true absolutism is dynamic, concrete. "While the false absolutist made too much of the reciprocal implication of things and the unity of the universe, the pluralist over-emphasizes the sharpness and distinction of things, their uniqueness and individuality. What we need is a dynamic monism capable of accounting for the growing universe with its time and change."<sup>171</sup> In keeping with this observation, Radhakrishnan sets out to construct a "true and dynamic" type of absolutism, based on the Upanishads. His proposals for such an absolutism are found in the last section of *The Reign of Religion*. The whole scheme is grounded on a free interpretation of the Absolute of the Upanishads. Accordingly, he tries to demonstrate that reality "is the whole, the Absolute, which is the highest concrete" and is so rich that its wealth of content refuses to be put into the intellect. But "the intellect has access to it," although "it can never exhaust its fulness."<sup>172</sup>

### *The Rational Faculty*

Professor Robert W. Browning rightly observes, "There is a strand in Radhakrishnan which suggests a dependence upon the rationalistic method in metaphysics."<sup>173</sup> Yet this reflects only a transitional stage in Radhakrishnan's thought, when his understanding of the human mind was rather limited. But in another sense he has always remained a rationalist. Radhakrishnan makes a number of assertions about the Absolute qua absolute, which

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.

<sup>173</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 264-65.

reflect the self-confidence of reason and the reliance on the rational faculty. As an instance, he says, "the creation of the world is an expression of the absolute." Professor Browning draws the very legitimate conclusion: "It is difficult to see how such propositions concerning the Absolute could be asserted with such confidence as extrapolations from the empirical materials at our disposal. It is more plausible to suppose that such theses are taken to be rational necessities or at least coping stones in a dialectical edifice."<sup>174</sup> In fact we could go further than Professor Browning and say that Radhakrishnan is rationalistic and speculative enough to be put in a class with Hegel, who strove to reach the Absolute through the faculty of reason and believed that he could. "Absolute idealism," Radhakrishnan declares "has faith in the hidden harmonies of the Universe, because they are to it matters of logical demonstration."<sup>175</sup> Radhakrishnan believes that, far from remaining unknowable, ultimate reality can be penetrated by the power of the human mind. "Hindu Systems of thought believe in the power of the human mind to lead us to all truth."<sup>176</sup> Reason itself has sprung from, and has its foundation in, the absolute, the absolute being ultimately rational. "We cannot credit the human reason," he writes, "with any authority if it is ultimately traceable to non-rational causes."<sup>177</sup> But there is a higher power of the mind or reason than we ordinarily know. "Our ordinary mind is not the highest possible order of the mind. It can rise to a level almost inconceivable to us."<sup>178</sup> Already we notice Radhakrishnan trying to stretch reason beyond its ordinary limits and to find it located in the primeval source of the mind from which all faculties arise.

## 2. INTUITIONISM

So far we have heard Radhakrishnan speak with the accents of rationalism in describing his idealistic position. But this is not the complete picture. As already seen in the last citation, he is straining towards a conception of the mind which is more than the purely intellectual. In fact he is anxious to do away with the

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, p. 265.

<sup>175</sup> *Reign of Religion*, p. 191.

<sup>176</sup> *The Spirit in Man* (*Contemporary Indian Philosophy*) p. 484.

<sup>177</sup> *Reign of Religion*, p. 442.

<sup>178</sup> *The Spirit in Man*, (*Contemporary Indian Philosophy*) p. 484.

pre-eminence assigned to logic by the leading absolutists, particularly Hegel. The Ideas of Reason, which Kant declared are unknowable and which the idealists aver are knowable, are for him "not objects of logical knowledge, but intuited certainties".<sup>179</sup> Now Radhakrishnan undertakes the task of transforming the faculty of reason into something fuller and richer than is connoted by the term "logic." "Reason," he writes, "is not a faculty co-ordinate with others. It is the whole mind in action, the inevitable root from which all other faculties arise."<sup>180</sup> Reason thus described is surely not logical or discursive reason or intellect. It is simply another name for intuition.

The insufficiency of reason or the intellect is something which he had recognized from his early days, even when he was extolling it in his early work. But the realization becomes clearer to him as time passes on. In his *Indian Philosophy* he writes:

To the concrete life of experience our intellects are quite adequate. Nay, they are made for each other, practically the parallel manifestations of one process. If Sankara regards intellect as not the highest mode of man's consciousness, it is because the completed world of intellect still leaves us with a riddle. The completed world of logic is not the completed world of life and experience. . . . The triumph of thought is the triumph of the concrete but the most concrete thought is abstract in the sense that it is incapable of apprehending reality as it is.<sup>181</sup>

However, his doctrine of intuition, as the faculty of the mind that enriches reason and makes it fit to know reality, is fully developed—as all other doctrines, in fact—in his mature and most significant work, *An Idealist View of Life*.

#### *Intuitionism above Rationalism*

In his *Idealist View*, it would appear at a first glance, that he is reversing his position adopted in the earlier work, *The Reign of Religion* vis-a-vis the problem of the relation between intellect and intuition. But a deeper study of the works will show that that is really not the case. Through these and other works he is really developing a doctrine of the human mind, of which at first

<sup>179</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 170-71.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, p. 170.

<sup>181</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 523-24.

he perceived one aspect clearly and the other aspects dimly and later began to perceive all aspects with equal clarity.

That the unconditioned reality is knowable by the human mind Radhakrishnan does not doubt. This is where he thinks Kant is wrong and his successors are right. "Kant's successors realize that the true or the objective is what thought is compelled to think by its own nature. When Hegel said that the real is the rational he is stating this important truth,"<sup>182</sup> thus observes Radhakrishnan. He also declares that there is a correspondence between the ultimate constitution of the human mind and reality, in these words: "If the faculty of reason gives us a notion of the world higher than the phenomenal, something that is not the effect of any cause but the ultimate cause of all effects, and if it shapes this notion into the ideas of God, freedom and immortality, it means that these are worked into the very structure of the mind."<sup>183</sup>

Yet, although he agrees with the absolutists that reality is knowable, he would not accept the usual rationalistic implications of this proposition. He senses dangers in the customary rationalist procedure. Radhakrishnan is thus forced to part company with Hegel and his followers insofar as "they make thought not only revelatory but constitutive of reality."<sup>184</sup> One inevitably arrives at this position when one follows the rationalists to the logical end. "For some Hegelians if not for Hegel," complains Radhakrishnan, "thought alone, in and for itself, is the creator of all existence. Reality becomes thought incarnate, the idea made flesh."<sup>185</sup> Rationalism that is represented here uses reason wrongly. In place of this he wants the right use of reason which intuition alone will make possible. If intuition has to come to terms with intellect, then intellect in turn has to be made living by intuition. Knowing reality is a task that calls for the close comradeship between the two. "Intellect and intuition are not two opposed methods of grasping reality, for only a comradeship between the two can help us to a knowledge of

<sup>182</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 170.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52. Bradley says: "Unless thought stands for something that falls beyond mere intelligence, if 'thinking' is not used with some strange implication that never was a part of the meaning of the word, a lingering scruple still forbids us to believe that reality can never be purely rational." *Appearance and Reality*.

reality as it is."<sup>186</sup> Reason must be in touch with the vital springs of the mind, namely intuition, and must be energized by them. Intuition is the very basis of the intellect. Intellect of course has not been discarded, but has been so thoroughly subordinated to intuition that it is preserved as a function of intuition.

### *The Intuitive Faculty*

Intuition is distinguished from intellect. "Intuitive truths as simple acts of mental vision are free from doubt. They do not carry conviction on the grounds of their logical validity... Strictly speaking logical knowledge is non-knowledge, *avidyā*, valid only till intuition arises."<sup>187</sup> Direct perception or simple and steady looking upon an object is intuition. "It is not a mystic process, but the most direct and penetrating examination possible for the human mind."<sup>188</sup> Intuitive knowledge is the "knowledge by which we see things as they are, as unique individuals and not as members of a class or units in a crowd." He designates it by the term "*aparokṣa*," which stands for "the non-sensuous immediate knowledge." "This intuitive knowledge," he writes, "arises from an intimate fusion of mind with reality." And, "it is knowledge by being and not by senses or symbols. It is awareness of the truth of things by identity."<sup>189</sup>

There are many places in Radhakrishnan's writings where he describes the intuitive faculty as the whole mind, as involving the exercise of the whole personality. He writes as follows: "It (intuition) is the wisdom gained by the whole spirit which is above any mere fragment thereof, be it feeling or intellect."<sup>190</sup> Again, "if we wish to know the inner nature of reality, we must resort to the whole personality of which intellect is only a part."<sup>191</sup> Bound together at the root of the human mind, there is no conflict between reason and intuition.

Now this faculty which comprises the "whole man" is also the answer to Kant's ruling that the unconditioned reality is unknowable; at the same time it refutes the declaration of the speculative idealists, chiefly Hegel, that reason in its logical form is adequate to the knowledge of reality.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, p. 164.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, p. 138.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, p. 146.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, p. 147.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, p. 146.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, p. 144.

## 3. MYSTICISM

Mysticism furnishes us with the means of knowing God. "Human arguments," Radhakrishnan writes, "are not at their best logical proofs and the most valuable part of our heritage comes from the prophetic souls who announce their deepest convictions, not as their discoveries or inventions but as self-revelation of God in their own souls."<sup>192</sup> Mysticism is intuition turned to the deepest of all realities, God. God as an Ideal of Reason springs from the womb of mysticism. "To say that the idea of God is a product of reason is to say that it is the outcome of the deepest life in man, the reaction of the nature of personality to the nature of the real."<sup>193</sup>

*The Mystical Faculty*

Is there such a thing as the mystical or religious faculty, which functions as an independent and autonomous means to the knowledge of God? This is an old and much debated question. One of the strongest opinions expressed in the affirmative is that of Rudolf Otto, who describes the religious faculty as "the numinous sense". Radhakrishnan also expresses himself in the affirmative. The mystical faculty is necessary as the basis of the mystical method of knowledge, which is one of the elements in integral experience. Radhakrishnan declares:

There is in the very self of man at the very centre of his being something deeper than the intellect, which is akin to the Supreme.... The spiritual glimpses are prophetic indications of an undeveloped power of apprehension in the human mind as well as of an undying reality with which it is unable to establish permanent contact without an adequate development of that power.<sup>194</sup>

In one place at least, Radhakrishnan gives a rather literal interpretation of this faculty. Perhaps through it he intends to emphasize his point very strongly. He writes as follows:

The man with five senses knows more than the blind man. May not the real exceed the empirical conceptions of it even as the world known to sight exceeds that known to touch? May not a state like that of Brahmanubhava or what Tennyson

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 219-20.<sup>193</sup> *Ibid*, p. 170.<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

has called a "last and largest sense" enlarge our knowledge of reality, as the gift of sight would enlarge that of a race of blind men?<sup>195</sup>

Without the use of the mystical faculty complete metaphysics is not possible, as otherwise complete knowledge of complete reality cannot be obtained. "Religion is in essence, experience, or living contact with, ultimate reality."<sup>196</sup> In religion there is "an apprehension of the real and an enjoyment of it for its own sake."<sup>197</sup> Religion is not knowledge in the sense in which Hegel understood it,<sup>198</sup> but nevertheless it involves a metaphysical view of the universe.<sup>199</sup> Radhakrishnan calls the religious faculty "the spiritual sense, the instinct for the real, which is not satisfied with anything less than the absolute and eternal."<sup>200</sup>

*The Relation of the Mystical Faculty to the Other Faculties*

It is clear that Radhakrishnan considers the faculty of mystical apprehension to be something special, unique and autonomous. Yet he would maintain that it is not discontinuous with the rest of our mental life. It is a special faculty, but it is not out of touch with the natural powers of the mind. It has to be located in the comprehensive whole of personality. Radhakrishnan advances several reasons for doing so.

(1) While he does not deny that a completely non-mediated knowledge is possible, he would maintain that in actual fact we cannot properly call anything knowledge unless it is set within the entire cognitive structure of the mind. "If all our experiences were adequately intuited at once, such immediate intuitions could not be doubted under any circumstances; but as it is, we are compelled to relate our intuitive experiences with others and here we are obliged to employ formulas."<sup>201</sup>

(2) For the purpose of communication and verification and for storing such experiences as part of our accumulated or remembered knowledge, that is, "to impart our experiences to others and to elucidate their implications for the rest of our life,"<sup>202</sup> it is necessary that the mystical faculty works in close cooperation with other faculties. Further, all knowledge is, in

<sup>195</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 504.

<sup>196</sup> *The Spirit in Man, (Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 492.

<sup>197</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 88.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.



one way of speaking, propositional and as such must be amenable to verification. "When we test the claim of the experiences to truth, we are really discussing the claims of the forms of the propositions in which the nature of the experience is unfolded."<sup>203</sup>

(3) Pure mystical experience by which we see the light as it is in its white radiance is only an ideal rarely realized. The rest of our mental apparatus is always at work even in the relatively discrete and exclusive of mystical experiences. For, "there is no such thing as pure experience, raw and undigested. It is always mixed up with layers of interpretation."<sup>204</sup>

(4) At other times, however, another reason is given, which seem to be just the opposite of the one mentioned immediately above. He says that "in the experience itself the self is wholly integrated."<sup>205</sup> The idea seems to be that the whole personality, with its rational and intuitive powers, has been redeemed and elevated by the mystical experience to its own level, so that a person is automatically rendered capable of reasoning the Truth and intuiting it as in mystical experience he perceives it face to face.

The last mentioned reason, however, turns out to be of no enduring importance in integral experience, because that is the ideal to which all knowledge must press forward. It means the perfect integration of the self in knowledge by which all the aspects of knowledge are also united. The clarification of the meaning and significance of this will, however, have to await the discussion of the ultimate reality which Radhakrishnan visualizes.

#### 4. INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE AND SELF-EVIDENT KNOWLEDGE

As it has already been remarked, Radhakrishnan accepts the basic presuppositions of the Advaita system, especially the necessity of self-evidence for metaphysics. But he expands the scope of self-evidence in such a way as to comprehend reason, intuition and

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, p. 99. For some reason, and it seems not with sufficient justification, Radhakrishnan singles out the Buddha "as the one who admitted the reality of the spiritual experience and yet refused to interpret it as a revelation of anything beyond itself."—*An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 99-100. And he asserts that "the Buddha keeps closest to the given and is content with affirming that a deeper world of spirit penetrates the visible and tangible world."

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96.

the deliverances of mystical experience. The step he takes is to re-interpret each one of these three elements in terms of the others and then to combine them into an integral unity and to demonstrate the combination to be the same as self-evidence.

The theory of integral experience is not developed from the primary datum of "I am" alone, as in the case of the doctrine of self-evidence of Advaita, but also from other data supplied by reason, intuition and religious experience. Thus it gives us a "many-coloured" philosophy. The Advaita also accepts these and other data but merely as posing problems which suggest and point to the solution that a metaphysics of the subject alone can give.<sup>206</sup> True self-evidence is subjective. Advaita vedantists conceive of the data of reason, intuition and religious experience as steps leading to the absolute knowledge, which is based on the subject alone and not, as in Radhakrishnan, as integral elements constituting the absolute knowledge. According to Radhakrishnan all these elements merge into one another and finally become an integral, indivisible, indissociable whole, which carries certainty and indubitability, answering to all aspects of the multi-faceted constitution. These initial remarks alone will suffice to give an

<sup>206</sup> Prof. G. R. Malkani clarifies the vedantic position on this matter, in his *Vedantic Epistemology* (and other works). Speaking of reason or logic he writes that it "has a positive role in philosophy in the interest of a higher truth which it elucidates." This truth gives orientation to logic . . . It is not itself a method of rational knowledge about a supersensible reality." pp. 89-90. *Logic or reason* "is a subsidiary instrument of truth," "but does not tell us what the truth itself is." p. 92. Referring to intuition he writes, "We must have a direct experience of it (reality), or an intuition of it. That alone has cognitive value in the end. Reason is not intuitive and does not provide us with a direct method of knowledge." p. 93. But Prof. Malkani cautions us because even here the objective attitude persists. Therefore, "we cannot stop with this knowledge either. We are obliged to criticize it too. pp. 93-94. Again, referring to religious experience he commends it as the supreme problem-setter for metaphysics. "Those who repudiate religious experience as unworthy of a philosopher's attention can have no positive metaphysics, if they have any metaphysics at all" p. 96. But he adds elsewhere, "Knowledge of spirit in religious consciousness is vague, undefined, inadequate, because religious experience is not explicitly cognitive. It starts with faith and ends in love. Accordingly, it offers a problem to theoretical consciousness. We need to go beyond it to a clearer knowledge of the reality of the spirit." p. 107. By the last phrase he means metaphysics of the subject. This position is entirely in accord with that of Prof. K. C. Bhattacharya, and is a clear depiction of the vedantic view of the matter.

idea as to the distinctiveness of Radhakrishnan's philosophy of integral experience.

### *The Integral Mind*

The procedure is dependent on his special understanding of the human mind. Intuition is used as the middle ground, from which discursive thought, or logic or what is commonly known as reason, and feeling or what is commonly known as intuition both spring; of this middle ground the mystical faculty is the centre or heart. Such seems to be Radhakrishnan's map of the human mind. At the root, reason and intuition are not sundered into two; the bifurcation takes place later. He speaks of the pristine nature of the human mind which can be found in "a state anterior to the divisions between intellect, feeling and will, where consciousness forms a unity which cannot be analysed."<sup>207</sup>

In many places in his writings, particularly in his essay, *The Spirit in Man*, he draws out his plan of the human mind. "The spirit in man" is integral consciousness, with the religious faculty situated at the centre. Accordingly, every aspect of man's thought and feelings has religious implications.<sup>208</sup> Even when a man is thinking about the most concrete and immediate matters, which might seem thoroughly empirical, he is in some way thinking about the ultimate. Even the most ordinary affirmations are in some way governed by religious determinations because man is inescapably a religious being. All parts of man's mind are tied together. Integral experience has implications for science, art and ethics.

### *Effects on Metaphysics*

In the Indian tradition there is no epistemology that is independent of metaphysics. This is also true of the tradition of the perennial philosophy. In Radhakrishnan also we find epistemology and metaphysics implying each other. As far as he is concerned we have noted how he proceeds from both ends in the matter of the problem of knowledge. As a vedantist he accepts the doctrine of self-evidence or *svaprakāśa* (self-luminosity) of

<sup>207</sup> *The Spirit in Man (Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 484.

<sup>208</sup> The line of thought indicated here offers interesting possibilities for a religious interpretation of human nature.

truth; yet proceeding from the rational and empirical end he wants to equate self-evidence with the integral whole of all the other methods of knowledge. This is worked up from the root of the mental faculties. Now self-evidence involves the subject or self. For the Advaita the subject is the unanalysable, unitary consciousness, which brings evidence of itself (*svayamsiddha*). Now Radhakrishnan would of course not replace it, but would equate it with an integrity or a synthetic whole of personal being. Much transformation of metaphysical concepts takes place in the course of the procedure. The equation of the unitary and integral self will also raise problems with regard to the relation between the universal Self and the individual self. For the latter the Advaita will give the clear-cut answer of identity. Radhakrishnan would accept identity too, but with qualifications. To the detailed consideration of these problems we shall now turn.

## 2. The Methodology of Integral Experience

### I

#### THE METHOD OF KNOWLEDGE

##### REASON, INTUITION AND MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Now we must address ourselves to the consideration of how Radhakrishnan remoulds the three elements, which we have just finished discussing, into components of his integral experience. This is, therefore, a question of method. But before we proceed further, we must make it clear here that, aside from permitting a certain inevitable mutual interpenetration of these elements, he employs the middle concept of intuition, by expanding it, as a generic one.

But Radhakrishnan has a habit of using "intuition" in different senses. Indeed the habit of using words in a variety of senses is a common iniquity of philosophers. The late Vice-chancellor J. L. Stocks of Liverpool remarked:

One of the strangest of the many strange habits of philosophers, which mark them out as the Ishmaels of the scientific world, is the refusal to agree as to the precise meaning of the word they may use. No philosopher, it seems, is bound to the definitions given by his predecessors or contemporaries of even the most central terms: each has to define his terms for himself.<sup>1</sup>

This is bad enough; but the situation that causes the greater consternation is when a philosopher insists on speaking in picture language in addition to using each term in a number of senses. Now take the word "intuition". Miss K. W. Wild has listed 31 different meanings for this word.<sup>2</sup> But they are not all used by any one author. A rule that we have followed in the case of

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Stocks, *Reason and Intuition*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> K. W. Wild, *Intuition*, pp. 221-210.

Radhakrishnan—one that seems good to us—is to interpret the meanings of the word “intuition,” as also of other pertinent words, in terms of the context of occurrence, taking whole sentences or even whole groups of sentences together. The word “intuition” however, has served a certain purpose in philosophy on account of its very vagueness and lack of definiteness. Accordingly,

It is often used when “instinct” would convey too much of the animal: when “revelation” would arouse suspicion; when “perception” would be too vague or too technical; “rapid synthesis of judgment” too prosaic; “the fruits of experience or observation” too loose; “innate or a priori knowledge” too disputable; or “one with” too incomprehensible.<sup>3</sup>

The source of the difficulty is not that “intuition” does not mean anything in particular but that there are many other words that would convey parts of the import of this word, while none of these could convey the whole import.

This being so, it is understandable that Radhakrishnan uses “intuition” in a number of senses. Professor Robert W. Browning gives an excellent analysis of Radhakrishnan’s usage, which is quoted below:

Sometimes it intimates what cannot be known in other ways; sometimes it means a fuller “realization” of what may be already abstractly known in symbols; sometimes it is attached to the dawning, in the mind of the discoverer, of what will be, after confirmation, a powerful scientific generalization; sometimes it denotes a knowledge of individual things in their concreteness; sometimes it is referring to unitive knowledge of the One Real. Sometimes it is accenting the dynamism of thinking as against the results; sometimes it is emphasizing a spontaneous dynamism as against movements which may be automatic or mechanical.<sup>4</sup>

This variety of meanings to which the word “intuition” lends itself is, perhaps, an argument against treating it as if it had only an emotive sense. It is vague enough, to be sure, but that shows rather that it has a plethora of meanings than the contrary.

Radhakrishnan is eager to demonstrate that, since life is one,

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 177-178.

the various processes of knowledge are not to be compartmentalized. There are certain main ways in which we acquire knowledge, namely, "sense experience, discursive thinking and intuitive apprehension"; but while they all give us some knowledge, it is the last alone that can give us a knowledge of the real.<sup>5</sup> Here the phrase "intuitive apprehension" is used in the generic sense, without attaching to it any particular technical meaning. It has a wide range, from the most sensuous intuition right up to the mystical. Sometimes Radhakrishnan's employment of the word "intuition" gives rise to grave confusion as to the particular meaning in which he uses it in a given context. On such occasions one will have to seek help from his general position. However, according to Radhakrishnan himself, there is a continuity among the three modes of knowledge, namely, sense-perception, discursive thinking and intuition. He notes that each of these is productive of knowledge, for there can be no means of cognition which does not yield some knowledge. But some deep insufficiency attends the first two. Sense experience and logical knowledge are "recognized as inadequate to the real which they attempt to apprehend."<sup>6</sup> The situation, however, is a little complex. Neither sense-perception nor intellect (reason), he avers, is really exempt from the pervasive power of intuition. It binds them together and links them with the highest intuition which is mystical. Both sense-perception and intuition are similar in that both are immediate knowledge. "Even in intellectual work there is scope for intuition," for "the postulates of thought, the pervasive features of experience, number, causality, provide scope for the exercise of the intuitive function."<sup>7</sup> Then we are suddenly told: "intuition is of two kinds, perceptual knowledge and integral experience." To this Radhakrishnan adds, by way of clarifying his own position, "Personally I use intuition for integral experience."<sup>8</sup> There are however, scores of places where he has used it in other senses. We will notice subsequently that even the phrase "integral experience" (as also the phrase "integral insight") is used with different connotations in different places. Usually it is used in an exclusive as well as an inclusive sense, meaning, just mystical experience alone, or mystical experience plus all other experiences, where intuition is involved,

<sup>5</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 134.

<sup>7</sup> "Reply to Critics," in Schilpp, *Op Cit.* p. 791.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 791.

taken together comprehensively. In the same way we will be able to discover that even the words "reason" and "intellect," and on rare occasions the word "logic" also, are used in a dual sense, as including and excluding intuition. Apart from the contexts, there is another very simple but sure test for finding out the sense in which he uses these words, which is this: if he uses them with approval then the sense is inclusive; if with disapproval, it is exclusive. It looks like an over-simplification, but in fact it is a good rule. Sometimes these words are used not merely as implying intuition but as forms of intuition. This ambiguity reaches down to every word. So the critic is forced to use the relatively most satisfactory devices for categorizing terms and phrases and for eliciting meanings from them. But surely the critic is not entirely left to himself, for he can seek guidance from the "spirit" and from the general tone and pattern of the subject's thought, in deciding what the devices should be. That indeed is the method that we have adopted.

Now let us revert to "intuition". This is the one word used by our author more frequently than any other. As we have observed, Radhakrishnan uses it in a baffling variety of senses. But it is justifiable to use it in all these senses. The root meaning of the word will help us see that in and through the various usages there persists a primitive and universal meaning. The word is derived from a verb which means "looking at" and its extended use must be presumed as a metaphor from sight.<sup>9</sup> Sight means directness and immediacy of knowledge and this is something that the philosophers who first used it—Descartes and Locke—had meant to convey by it. It is in this primitive and underived sense that Radhakrishnan also uses it, though he adopts a diversity of ways for expressing it. "Intuition, like the word *pratyakṣa*, in its original form *intuitus*, implies the sense of sight. It is used to cover all cognitive processes which have a directness or immediacy, i.e., all non-inferential cognition. What we know by inference or hearsay is not intuition."<sup>10</sup> Epistemologically, intuition stands for self-evidence.

The central problem is, when can we say that an item of knowledge, a certain cognition carries its own evidence or that it certifies itself, needing help from nowhere else to prove

<sup>9</sup> J. L. Stocks, *Op Cit.* p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op Cit.* p. 791).



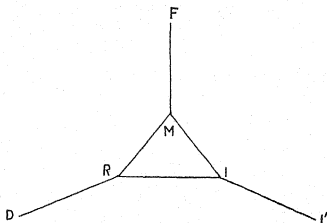
itself? What precisely are the conditions? This is the problem of problems for our philosopher. Whenever the quality of self-evidence or self-certification can be attributed to an experience, that experience must be regarded as intuitive—intuitive in the generic sense and not in the special sense used by intuitionists like Bergson. This means that Radhakrishnan gives a far more general application to the word "intuition" than the specialists.

Radhakrishnan also uses intuition in the generic sense as a connecting link between reason, intuition in the special sense and mystical or supernal experience. Certainly it is commonly held that it is far more natural for intuition to go forward in its own direction and meet mystical experience than to move in the opposite direction and to meet reason or intellect. The erroneous notion, which is ordinarily entertained, that intuition is *eo ipso* supernatural is at the root of this common belief. The fact is that by definition intuition is neither supernatural nor opposed to reason. "There are many who argue that they have no experience of intuitive knowledge. This is due to a misapprehension. Intuitive knowledge is not limited to the highest knowledge of God."<sup>11</sup>

Now there are reason, intuition and mystical experience, these three; but the greatest of them is mystical experience, which is unique and altogether different from the others, and yet is the crown and apex of knowledge. Now intuition is the most comprehensive of all because it can move upward to mystical experience and downward to reason. Also, Radhakrishnan does not hold reason in disregard because he recognizes it to be the most solid, being the most earthly, of all the means of knowledge and hence thought indispensable. All the three serve the ends of ultimate truth, but they do so only when they are directed towards one another. When they are so directed and when they face one another and move towards one another, they form an integrity which Radhakrishnan designates "integral experience". When each of them is directed away from the others, according to his thought, they should be regarded as something like minus projections, which lead away from the truth. Thus, the minus projection in the case of reason or intellect is "discursive thought" and "conceptualism"; that in the case of intuition is "instinct" and "anti-intellectualism"; and that in the case of mystical

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 793.

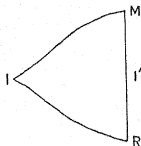
experience is "fantasy" and "hallucination". The following diagram will illustrate this.



M stands for mystical experience, R for reason or intellect, I for intuition. F stands for fantasy and hallucination, D for discursive thought and conceptualism, I' for instinct and anti-intellectualism. Each one of the three vertices, M, R and I, must move towards the other two or rather, to the plane opposite to itself and not away from it. That kind of movement is the characteristic of integral experience.

Again, the generic concept of intuition as distinct from the specialized concept can be applied as the binding factor in all the three. For, only on account of it can the three forms of knowledge, reason, intuition and mystical experience be directed towards one another. Reason will be transformed into rational intuition; intuition in the special sense, into intuition of feeling; and mystical experience, into mystical or spiritual intuition, or in other words into integral intuition in the specialized sense. We will illustrate this by the following diagram.

M stands for mystical intuition, I' for specialized intuition, that is, intuition of feeling, and R for rational intuition. The extended line M I' R is to be regarded as an expansion, or analytical representation of I, which is generic intuition, being potentially the same as integral experience. Integral experience in the specialized sense is the same as mystical experience (M). This is the outline of the methodological procedure that can be detected



as implicitly operative in Radhakrishnan's thought. Radhakrishnan's position is that these various types of intuition supporting one another and compensating one another will amount to self-evidence. To consider this method in detail and to check whether the result of this method will give us the substance of self-evidence we shall now proceed. In this work, however, we will not ask ourselves the cognate questions, which are bound to arrive here, whether there can be a science of self-evidence or a philosophy completely based on a self-evident principle or a set of self-evident principles, and whether what we consider the very ultimate in self-evidence itself is not pervaded and vitiated by what Kant has described to us as the antinomies of reason. That can perhaps form the subject of a different investigation but we shall refrain from undertaking it here, in view of the restriction we have imposed upon ourselves. Furthermore, as far as possible, we shall stick to our own categorization. Whenever our author refers to integral experience in the specialized sense we shall try to use "mystical experience", "mystical insight" or "mystical intuition", or something else that conveys the meaning without creating confusion. We shall also, as far as possible, avoid using "intuition" for the specialized intuition. But there are times when we shall have to yield to necessity, when the author does not facilitate such discrete usages.

#### INTUITION AS UNITY BETWEEN THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN

Before we pass on to a full-scale discussion of the theme depicted above, it will be well to point out another aspect of intuition as such which will have a bearing on the discussion to follow.

Intuition implies a unity between the knower and the known. "Intuitive knowledge", Radhakrishnan tells us, "is knowledge by coincidence or identity". This involves two things, (1) the reality with which unity is attained and (2) the degree of unity. Knowledge in any form is due to intuition, we are told, and all intuition is unity. Sense perception, reason and mystical experience represent the various degrees of unity. Radhakrishnan writes:

Besides consciousness in the animal world (perception and action), and self-consciousness in the human (intelligence and will), we have spiritual consciousness or super-consciousness, a level of experience at which new aspects of reality reveal themselves. While in the first case we have a psychological unity between the animal and the environment, in the second we have a logical unity and in the third a spiritual unity.<sup>12</sup>

He continues, "At the spiritual level, the individual becomes aware of the substance of the spirit, and not as an object of intellectual cognition but as an awareness in which the subject becomes its own object, in which the timeless and the spaceless is aware of itself as the basis and reality of all experience."<sup>13</sup>

The degree of unity attained is related both to the object and to the degree of concentration effected in an act of intuition. The more concentrated the attention given to an object the greater becomes the experience of unity with it. But we are told that the most concentrated attention is objectless, because the object is united with the subject. The unities established by the intuition of feeling and rational intuition are partial. The absolute or mystical intuition stands to reason and feeling as whole to parts. Until the whole is reached all forms of identities are bound to be partial. Radhakrishnan uses the term "*samādhi*", stripped of its historical and technical meaning, to convey the sense of unity or identity achieved in knowledge. He does make a distinction between mystic *samādhi* and empirical *samādhi*. (Historical scholars of Indian Philosophy will perhaps argue that there is no warrant to talk of *samādhi* in an empirical way at all.) The mystic *samādhi* is presented as ultimate, because it is "ecstatic consciousness" and carries "a sense of immediate contact with ultimate reality, of the unification of the different sides of our

<sup>12</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 301-302.

nature".<sup>14</sup> It is also called by the name "mokṣa" which means spiritual liberation or perfect realization. It is "freedom from historicity or temporal processes or birth, which are all forms of time".<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, short of this absolute identity of *mokṣa*, we are told of another kind of identity, which is a kind of complete knowing of a concrete thing or idea or objectified image among the apparently plural entities of the realm of *māyā*. "It is a kind of simple and steady looking upon an object" such as practised by the *yogin*.<sup>16</sup> It is certainly different from "the consummatory toti-metaphysical insight in which empirical pluralities are transcended and all is apprehended as one".<sup>17</sup> Now, corresponding to the three types of intuitions we have three types of unity. Rational intuition and intuition of feeling belong together and mystical or transcendental intuition is in a class by itself. The first two can be called empirical intuitions because the objects with which unity is attained are empirical and the degrees of unity are also of not higher than the empirical level. Let us now first of all address ourselves to the problem of empirical intuitions.

#### *Empirical Intuitions—Two Types*

Rational intuition is drawn from the order of thinking, while the intuition of feeling, from the order of feeling. The primary task is to reconcile these two. Hegel's bias against intuition and Bergson's bias against the intellect are both criticized. Hegel and Bergson are taken to be the representatives of the merely rational (logical) and the merely intuitive (instinctive) types of cognition, respectively. The one of these types of cognition is moved by discursive thought and the other by vitalistic impulse. Both must be corrected by directing them towards each other. Radhakrishnan insists that intuition, to be really intuition, must contain elements of rationality. He notes that "there is a tendency in Bergson to oppose intuition to intellect".<sup>18</sup> "Intellect not only must be present, but must be on the stretch," he says, for, "in moving from intellect to intuition we are not moving in the

<sup>14</sup> *The Reign of Religion*, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, (1926), Edited by Edgar S. Brightman, p. 685.

<sup>16</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 146.

<sup>17</sup> Robert W. Browning in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.* pp. 179-180.

<sup>18</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 148.

direction of unreason but are getting into the deepest rationality of which human nature is capable".<sup>19</sup> Yet this is not to say that intellect alone can be present and function fruitfully without certain essential elements drawn from the order of intuition. Even the work of reason cannot be properly prosecuted without the aid of intuition. "Hegel thinks," writes Radhakrishnan, "that he makes little use of intuition. As a matter of fact he attacks Jacobi's view of intuition for the obvious reason that he views it as an abstraction unrelated to the rest of mental life".<sup>20</sup> Again, "With Kant we may say that no legitimate concept is possible without a previous intuition. This sense of the One which is a central feature of Hegel's system is an announcement of an intuition and not the result of a demonstration".<sup>21</sup> Reason must have the support of the whole mind, including feeling and will. "Hegel is wrong," Radhakrishnan tells us "when he regards intuition as something unrelated to intellect and incapable of giving anything else than simple being".<sup>22</sup> Intuition is now presented as comprehending both feeling and intellect. "Intuition is not a-logical but supra-logical. It is the wisdom gained by the whole spirit, which is above any mere fragment thereof, be it feeling or intellect".<sup>23</sup> "In it, we think more profoundly, feel more deeply, and see more truly".<sup>24</sup> Here we think, see and feel "in obedience to our whole nature" and not merely "by the fragmentary standards of the intellect".<sup>25</sup> Intuition is defined as thinking "with a certain totality or wholeness". Below is a unique passage, which implies that intuition and intellect are parallel faculties that exist alongside of each other, and also implies that intuition includes the intellect as the whole includes the part. This incidentally is an instance of the lack of definiteness in terminology, which we have observed before. But the confusion will vanish if we understand that the term "intuition" is used in the sense of intuition of feeling (the specialized intuition of which we have mentioned) as well as, in the comprehensive, generic sense. Here is a significant passage: "Both intellect and intuition belong to the self. While the former involves a specialized part, the latter employs the whole self. The two are synthesized in the self, and their activities are interdependent".<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

The burden of the argument is that "it is the whole mind that will reach the whole object". Our search for truth should not be either merely rational or passional; it must be both. "The essence of things cannot resist the concentrated attack of the whole mind." Great creations of art, great discoveries in science, and achievements in the realms of morality and religion are all due to such concentrated attacks of the whole mind, where the intellectual and the feeling elements were cooperatively at work. An increasing wholeness of the mind will produce an increasing wholeness of vision and knowledge. Every area of human experience and activity, whether art, science, morality or religion, is an area of the realization of the spirit in man. But religion offers the consummatory means, for, "while the spirit in man fulfils itself in many ways, it is most completely fulfilled in the religious life. Here is consciousness in its full and simultaneous realization." Besides, religious intuition for Radhakrishnan is "an all-comprehending one, covering the whole of life". Religion "is the reaction of the whole man to the whole reality".<sup>27</sup> Here religion is depicted not as an experience involving a unique, and autonomous category of apprehension, a special faculty, but a synthetic whole of all the faculties. Here, we must admit that religious experience is visualized in a different manner. "We seek the religious object by the totality of our faculties and energies."<sup>28</sup> But we must also not fail to perceive that this is part of a certain methodological procedure, which has already been anticipated. This procedure involves creating a bridge between the "whole personality" and supernal religious apprehension. But for this bridge, integral experience would be meaningless. This would mean that empirical types of intuition also are perpetually in a state of inherent upward tension. Even empirically speaking, there is an intrinsic movement within the rational and feeling intuitions themselves, which makes them increasingly whole and takes them to the very borderland of religious experience. At this point empirical experience transcends itself; to do so is its real destiny. There it points, and bears faint witness, to the super-conscious mystical intuition. It is as though in this manner empirical experience will find a way of progressively participating in religious experience, that is, the experience of the super-conscious. Inversely, it is also postulated that the element of

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.

truth in all empirical experience is derived from this region of absolute certainty.

### RATIONAL INTUITION

Now, of the two kinds of empirical intuitions, let us first take for consideration rational intuition. The process of reasoning itself according to Radhakrishnan proceeds from the power of intuition. He would say that our very wanting to know, as well as our belief that we can know, presupposes some intuitive knowledge.

The deepest convictions by which we live and think, the root principles of all thought and life are not derived from perceptual experience or logical knowledge. How do we know that the universe is in its last essence sound and consistent ? . . . For our senses and intellect the world is a multiplicity of more or less connected items external to themselves, and yet logic believes that this confused multiplicity is not final, and the world is an ordered whole.<sup>29</sup>

Not only in our everyday life but also in our advanced acts of knowledge, "we assume the rationality of the world"; if we do not assume it, then "the synthetic activity of knowledge becomes impossible and unmeaning".<sup>30</sup> Some basic questions in philosophy and science which are very seldom asked are: Where does logic come from ? What is its validation ? Surely, mere observation does not give us faith in logic. Even supposing that it will, still we have not conducted an exhaustive observation of the whole universe and all the depths of the human soul. "We have not searched the outermost bounds of nature or the innermost recesses of the soul to be able to say that the systematic unity of the world is a logical conclusion".<sup>31</sup> He answers the question, where does logic come from ? thus: "our logical impulse is a power of the self, and therefore possesses in its own being the vision of the law that governs the universe".<sup>32</sup> It is intuition that "tells us that the world is part of a spiritual order".<sup>33</sup> He identifies logic with a kind of rational or "reasonable" faith which is justified by the universe. But at no stage can logic demonstrate itself without our faith in its laws. "Our whole logical life grows

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.



on the foundations of a deeper insight, which proves to be wisdom and not error because it is workable."<sup>34</sup> This is also what the pragmatist logic would say. But there is a difference, for, the pragmatists would be willing to relegate all knowledge to the realm of hypothesis and probability,<sup>35</sup> while Radhakrishnan is not.

For Radhakrishnan, the justification of logic is not based on induction, because we can still ask, what is it that certifies the steps in an inductive operation? Can induction certify itself? Even if we reply that it can do so, still we cannot escape the necessity to concede that somewhere, something certifies itself. We might push the answer a little farther back and delay a little to commit ourselves. But we cannot get away from the fact that somewhere something certifies itself. Russell and others, likewise, have long ago come to the conclusion that if any knowledge is to be certain, then, some knowledge will have to be self-evident. Along with Russell many other logicians have recognized this fact. According to Radhakrishnan's way of thinking, logic is true because it is the soul that imparts to it its truth. The substance of all this argument is that the truth of logic resides in the soul and that logic springs from the soul. Logic is informed with the nature of the soul. A deft turn in this line of argument, however, will bring it in tune with the Kantian notion that, since logic springs from the mind, time and space and the whole objective order of the universe are nothing but the imposition of the forms of the mind upon reality. But Radhakrishnan would pull himself away from such a conclusion. He would insist that there is a correspondence between the soul and the universe in that the same order is to be discovered in both. They both come from a common source. Logic which springs from the soul simply "tells us that the world is part of a spiritual order".<sup>36</sup> It does not create that order.

Radhakrishnan uses another line of argument to show that the dependability of logic is due to the impartation to it of a certain quality of the soul. The soul can only conceive of certain things and not of their opposites. Rational intuitions are true because their "opposites are inconceivable".<sup>37</sup> He applies the Kantian "proof" by means of the "a priori" to substantiate this contention. As they are "the apprehensions of the soul", "disbelief in

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>35</sup> Refer, John Dewey, *Logic*, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *An Idealist view of Life*, p. 154.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

them would mean complete scepticism".<sup>38</sup> A thing is true because its opposite is inconceivable<sup>39</sup> and if not accepted would lead to scepticism and unbelief. We should not seek to base all knowledge merely on perception and conception, because "if all knowledge were of the type of perception or conception, disbelief would become inevitable".<sup>40</sup> This in fact amounts to ranging a priori convictions against observation and logical verification. Of course we must remember that, for Radhakrishnan, observation means simply uninterpreted neutral sensory awareness, which does not really give any knowledge,<sup>41</sup> and concept which is the instrument of logical verification is logic gone perverse. "We only obtain an acquaintance with the sensory qualities of the objects" by means of perception and they are "the subject-matter of natural science which builds up a conceptual structure to describe them".<sup>42</sup> If, however, one asserts that a thing is true because it is undbelievable and its opposite inconceivable<sup>43</sup> and not because it has been observed to be true and established by verification, then one is giving apriorism a free rein. We must also say that all convictions are not true intuitions or "apprehensions of the soul" and even if they are such the truth that they can claim need not necessarily be of the objective order.

Now to come back to the question of the relation between logic and the soul, it perhaps need not be denied that the innermost life of the soul gives reason its being and its urge to relate perceptions to the soul and thus to one another, and gives it also the conviction that perceptions are thus relatable into an ordered whole so as to constitute our universe. The last mentioned factor

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>40</sup> *An Idealist view of Life*, p. 156.

<sup>41</sup> Randall and Buchler observe rightly, that "absolutely pure observation is a myth, or if not a myth, is nothing but dumb sensation and feeling." They add, "Meaningful or intelligent observation involves reflection or interpretation"—Randall and Buchler, *Philosophy: An Introduction*, p. 111.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>43</sup> Professor Ernest Nagel rightly takes issue with Professor Ducasse, who builds up the theory of truth in terms of "ultimate undbelievability" of the proposition that is subjected to verification. Professor Nagel characterizes the criteria of "undbelievability" and "unbelievability" as quasi-psychological, which results from attitudes that can be induced in many ways. See article "Truth and Knowledge of the Truth" in E. Nagel, *Logic Without Metaphysics*, pp. 155-158.

is vitally important; on account of it we can know that "the order of nature is a dependable unity because the self is itself a unity".<sup>44</sup> Kant too believed in intuitive certainty, but only so far as the categorical imperative or the underived moral consciousness was concerned. Radhakrishnan criticizes Kant because moral certitude is the only point at which he makes manifest the intuitive quality of reason. Radhakrishnan for his part would urge the extension of this intuitive quality to all fields of human experience. According to the restriction imposed by Kant, all forms of knowledge other than moral consciousness will have to draw their material from sensory experience, and the trouble is that "the matter actually supplied is not adequate for the requirements of the principle of reason".<sup>45</sup> The only function that the Ideas of Reason are called upon to perform is to regulate the work of the understanding, based on experiences delivered by the senses; they are thus freed from all metaphysical roles. Therefore for Kant, Radhakrishnan thinks, "science in the last resort is a faith and a hope, the faith of reason in its own supremacy, and the hope in the rationality of the world".<sup>46</sup> However, Radhakrishnan's criticism of Kant on this point will bear a lot of criticism itself, but we do not propose to undertake it, for we are concerned only to find out what bearing this has on his own thought.

The burden of Radhakrishnan's arguments is that reality is knowable by a series of rational intuitions. Intuitive understanding of reality is not merely a prerogative of God as Kant legislated. Kant's inability to help us further lies, according to him, in his "inadequate perception of the power of the human mind to pass beyond the distinctions of the understanding to the unity that underlies them".<sup>47</sup> Radhakrishnan thinks that by means of rational intuition we can know things as they are in themselves as well as the real world, and the possibilities of such knowledge is not limited by anything. But the question that we might put to him is, can philosophy give us a system of infallible intuitions and insights on which we can build our knowledge? The sceptic will be pardoned if he doubts whether we can build an entire system of metaphysics on intuitive knowledge of reality and of the world. We may admit that the

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

primeval light of reason springs from an intuitive basis, from which also proceeds the inner certitude that we have regarding our thinking and reasoning. But if we carry this intuitive basis too far we will lose the power to discriminate between the truth and the falsehood that should be attributed to particular items in the deliverances of rational intuition. It would be open to criticism to hold that "intuitive truths as simple facts of mental vision are free from doubt".

Radhakrishnan makes rational knowledge of reality, of the world and the self, a system of insights. "Philosophy is not so much a conceptual reconstruction as an exhibition of insights".<sup>48</sup> And each insight is received as though by a sudden illumination. The emphasis is again on the inner certitude. Of course "inner certitude" of reason would lead us to an indefensible position if reason is conceived in the ordinary manner, as "objective thinking" or "objective thought", that is, as the manipulation in an objective way of logical and empirical data, for then, it would mean that rational processes are infallible. But Radhakrishnan has a different notion of reason itself, and has re-interpreted it as a form of intuition. Accordingly, "the creative insight is not the final link in a chain of reasoning. If it were that it would not strike us as 'inspired' in its origin".<sup>49</sup> Creative work "advances by leaps". The true work of reason is described by the term "inspiration". In the realm of science this "inspiration" manifests itself as an "instinct for research", and "even the most successful investigators are quite unable to give us an account of their reasons for such and such an experiment, or for placing side by side two apparently unrelated factors".<sup>50</sup> Systematic logical processes (in this context he refers to them as "intellect", just to distinguish them from "rational intuition", one supposes), can only take us up to the gate of "inspiration"; they cannot lead us into the temple of truth. Therefore they are dismissed at that stage, as they are of no more service. But the rational discipline is important and indispensable as a preparation for intuition. Radhakrishnan agrees with Bergson—and Plato—that this kind of intuitive insight is possible only "for those who are prepared for it, by intellectual discipline and hard thinking".<sup>51</sup> He quotes Bergson with approval when he says: "we do not

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176. Cf. *The Sceptical Biologist*, p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

obtain an intuition from reality—that is an intellectual sympathy with the most intimate part of it—unless we have won its confidence by a long fellowship with its superficial manifestations”.<sup>52</sup> Again, “philosophy as conceptual knowing is a preparation for intuitive insight”.

It is important to note that though rational thinking and logical discipline and also concentrated work attended with sweat are an indispensable preparation for the occurrence of intuition, there is a gap, a discontinuity between intuition itself and the ladder which leads to it. For, “an intellectual inaction seems to be the prelude to the intuitive flash”.<sup>53</sup> Radhakrishnan insists that in order to receive such flashes of inspiration one has to be “relaxed” and even “passive”.<sup>54</sup> It is only in that state that mind can attain illumination. It is evident that in this context Radhakrishnan is not speaking of the highest spiritual or mystical intuition, but rather of empirical illumination of truths regarding the world, such as belong to the domains of Science, Philosophy and the Arts. There, however, is also no doubt that even when he speaks of this kind of rational intuition he verges on the super-normal, mystical, intuition. In the language of Radhakrishnan those who can achieve illumination or inspiration such as we have just described are the geniuses. It is the genius who discovers truths. “If the process of discovery were mere synthesis, any mechanical manipulator of prior partial concepts would have reached the insight, and it would not have required a genius to arrive at it”.<sup>55</sup> This is described as the capacity to grasp a situation uniquely and as a whole, whether it takes place “in a game of chess or a mathematical problem”.<sup>56</sup> It also is described as “a grasping of the intellectual togetherness as a whole” and as an “intuition of the whole sustained by different steps”. The last quotation, however, suggests that, in spite of our philosopher’s insistence on the suspension of the intellect in moments of intuition or unique inspiration, there is also an assumption of a

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148. Cf. Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, E.T. (1913), p. 77.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178. Bergson also has a similar view of intuition, as the revealer of scientific truths, for he “seems to imply a situation where Newton (let us say) has a sudden flash of intuition, in which the reality of gravitation is disclosed to him.” (Randall and Buchler, *Op. Cit.* p. 110).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

deductive or inductive step by step process that accompanies it. But this is indefinite.

Now, we might agree with Radhakrishnan—and with Bergson, who holds the same view as Radhakrishnan—that there are moments when it is necessary to rely upon some intuition to hold together in a creative manner all the various parts of a complex logical or mathematical problem. But one might nevertheless question whether this grasp is attended with objective certainty. It is quite conceivable that sometimes we may gain a conviction that we have really grasped a line of proof—the whole of it and every part of it—when in reality the certitude might not be more than subjective, with no real grounds to demonstrate that all gaps have been closed. Now as Randall and Buchler<sup>57</sup> point out in their criticism of Bergson, we can concede that “there unquestionably is such a thing as insight (‘intuition,’ if we wish to call it that) in Science”, which is really “the spontaneous occurrence of a fertile idea to the scientific man”, but such insight “is something *tentative*”, “a rough approximation which calls for formulation and testing on an elaborate scale”, and by no means to be regarded as “an unmistakable and immediate apprehension of the real”. On the other hand, Bergson’s (and Radhakrishnan’s) intuition, “is essentially something which both originates and remains with the individual mind”. Intuition as the foundation of scientific truth as Radhakrishnan (as also Bergson) works it out seems, therefore, to be of doubtful value.

If philosophy consisted merely of exhibition of insights, that is, if it were a system of unique intuitions, as Radhakrishnan implies, then we are bound to have an infallible philosophy. But that would amount to changing the very definition of philosophy. It is only a system of revelation that will want to claim infallibility. But systems of philosophy can only talk about the conditions for the knowledge of truths. According to Radhakrishnan’s definition, we should also have an infallible science and a perfect form of art that expresses truth absolutely, because they are discoveries—or creations—by geniuses in their moments of inspiration. But this is far from being the case. How has it come about that the situation is as it is? There are two possibilities: either all our insights are not infallible, not even all the

<sup>57</sup> Randall and Buchler, *Op. Cit.* p. 110.

ones that seem to be self-evident to the recipient, or the error must be in the method of relating them one with another. The first implies a criticism of the notion of the rational intuition entertained by Kant, who was also the father of the idea of rational intuition as such. According to him, our intuitions of reality are much less than infallible, for in his way of thinking it was not things-in-themselves that we intuit but only some mental abstractions of them. Many philosophers, following him, have renounced the knowledge of the real object as their goal, substituting for it an *abstract concept* of the real object. It is not the thing that they claim to know any more but a mental construction. But Kant somehow had preserved the thing as distinct from our thought of it. But Hegel came along and revised Kant's position. Nevertheless this revision was no real improvement, for Hegel simply identified the thing with the thought; rather, he turned the thought itself into the thing. But rational intuition in Radhakrishnan's terms does not involve this kind of identification of the thing with the thought. It means only our possession of a power of insight whereby we see the thing, the object, as it is in itself, without it undergoing any kind of modification. "The question resolves itself," writes Radhakrishnan, "into whether we *see* becoming or only *think* it, whether we conceive reality by thought or only intuit it by an altogether peculiar power of direct insight".<sup>58</sup> Hegel and others accepted concepts in the place of intuitions, and treated them as if they were infallible, though they can by no means be so regarded.

The second also implies a criticism of Kant and Hegel. This concerns the method of relating insights one with another. For Kant, it was by means of the discursive factor in thought, which functioned, to quote the words of G.R.G. Mure, "as the dispersion of an identical concept through a multiplicity of sensuous intuitions which instantiates it".<sup>59</sup> As for Hegel, as reality was identical with thought it obeyed the rules of logic or dialectic, and, therefore, relating intuitions was by means of logic or dialectic. Radhakrishnan accuses Hegel of reducing reality itself to a set of relations which can be dialectically understood.<sup>60</sup> Hegel was wrong in elevating "reality (itself) to the rank of a concept".<sup>61</sup> "The essential nature of Hegel's dialectic is an

<sup>58</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 150.

<sup>59</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 151.

<sup>60</sup> G.R.G. Mure, *An Introduction to Hegel*, p. 96.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 150.

immanent transcendence by which a limited and finite something passes over into its opposite so that the former cancels itself and together with its opposite is taken over into a higher and more comprehensive concept".<sup>62</sup>

Radhakrishnan tells us what he is really opposing. He is against employing concepts and conceptual systems for epistemological purposes. He does indeed uphold logic as we have seen already. "There is a need for logic and language: for the expression of all knowledge, perceptual, conceptual or intuitional, requires the use of concepts".<sup>63</sup> "The immediacy of intuitive knowledge can be mediated through intellectual definition and analysis. We use intellect to test the validity of intuitions and to communicate them to others".<sup>64</sup> But it must be remembered that Radhakrishnan gives a mandate to logic and conceptual thinking only in-so-far as they are instrumental in leading us to intuitive insights into things and their properties and in-so-far as they are needed as media for the exposition of such intuitive insights.<sup>65</sup> On the contrary, as for the deductive method of using concepts and logical relations for the purpose of arriving at truths, he will have none of it. For, truth, he would contend, cannot be arrived at that way. Truths are always seen, not thought. "Truths of philosophy are not proved but seen".<sup>66</sup>

Why does Radhakrishnan so irreconcilably oppose conceptual thinking? We will find an answer to this question when we discover what his real purpose is. It is to preserve rational intuitions in their purity, and to maintain them as the sole means of knowing the external and the internal worlds of man. "This logical or conceptual knowledge is indirect and symbolic in character".<sup>67</sup> But he concedes that "it helps us to handle and control the object and its workings".<sup>68</sup> Also, "logical knowledge enables us to know the conditions of the world in which we live and to control them for our ends".<sup>69</sup> Here as in many other places Radhakrishnan's and Bergson's thought are strikingly identical—and it is natural to conjecture that the younger philosopher has learned much from the older—for Bergson too "holds that whatever value empirical science can possess with respect to

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>64</sup> Reply to Critics, Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 794.

<sup>65</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 152.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.



the pursuit of truth is acquired only if it is based upon metaphysical intuition; also its value consists in its being an adjunct to the promotion of practical or technological ends".<sup>70</sup> Both make a radical distinction between pragmatic knowledge and knowledge as such. Conceptual and logical knowledge is pragmatic; it helps us to manipulate our environments, to do things, and to predict and control phenomena. That such value it has Radhakrishnan does not deny. But real knowledge is something different. Radhakrishnan writes: "But if we want to know things in their uniqueness, in their indefeatable reality, we must transcend discursive thinking".<sup>71</sup> We must have recourse to rational intuition, which means "direct perception or simple and steady looking upon an object".<sup>72</sup> "It is not a mystic process, but the most direct and penetrating examination possible to the human mind".<sup>73</sup>

We shall try to make an assessment of this position below. Now, even if we grant Radhakrishnan's contention, still we have to know how intuitions or insights spoken of are to be related one with another. He must concede one of the following three possibilities. (1) Rational knowledge consists of a system of unique intuitions, and therefore there is no need to relate them in an external way. That would be the logical conclusion of his position that philosophy is "an exhibition of insights". (2) The relations between unique rational intuitions may also be described by means of unique rational intuitions.<sup>74</sup> (3) If intuitions cannot be related to intuitions by the method of intuition itself, we will then have to adopt the deductive or conceptual method. If that method has to be successful, intuitions will have to be brought down to the level of concepts, because unique things cannot form part of a system. Obviously, Radhakrishnan would not accede to this alternative, for it is the same position as he criticizes and rejects. For intuition always stands out as that which supplies to systems themselves the properties that make them valid. "Intuitive knowledge is verified by its capacity to

<sup>70</sup> Randall and Buchler, *Op. Cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>71</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 146.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. G.R.G. Mure, *Op. Cit.*, p. 95, where it is said with reference to Kant. "...in the grasping of a conclusion (that is to say, in the movement of inference from premises to conclusion) a complementary factor of intellectual intuition is plainly manifest, not as act separate from discursion but as re-immediation of the discursive movement."

bring coherence and harmony into systems framed by the intellect".<sup>75</sup>

Now we have only two other alternatives left. Perhaps they are not incompatible; they could even be regarded as parts of the same method. There are utterances of Radhakrishnan's which support both the alternatives; and when taken together, probably, they constitute his view on the subject of logic. It is by no means easy to find out what aspect of "logic" he is objecting to, because it is not readily clear as to what he means by "logic". Sometimes he appears to condemn it wholesale, sometimes just certain aspects of it. Sometimes he even commends logic as necessary to philosophy. On the whole the weight of evidence would support the following conclusions: (a) When he speaks approvingly of "logic" he means something different from what the term stands for in the technical parlour, implying the method of systematizing knowledge by conceptual thought and deductive formulation. (b) When he speaks disapprovingly, he means logic in the technical and accepted sense. In a large number of his utterances his own private meaning and the public and accepted meaning seem mixed together, which makes for confusion and renders the task of interpretation considerably difficult.

Logical knowledge, however, as we ordinarily understand it, is given a mandate for the purposes of scientific control of the world, though we are left in no doubt that it is far removed from what may be legitimately considered real knowledge. Real knowledge consists of unique intuitions of objects, which may also be inter-related by similar intuitions of properties, and of relations that exist between things, as are done "in a game of chess or in a mathematical problem". But here we come up against a serious difficulty. In what way exactly do ordinary, logical, deductive processes of knowledge differ from the intuitive processes that take place in a game of chess or in a mathematical problem? Anyone who has manipulated a complicated conceptual system will testify that he too has experienced "a grasping of the intellectual togetherness as a whole" and has had "an intuition of the whole sustained by different steps". The only possible answer to a query that we may put to our philosopher in this regard would be that it is the man's experience at the moment when the intuition lasts that contains the truth and not

<sup>75</sup> "Reply to Critics," Schilpp, *Op. Cit.* p. 794.

the abstract conclusions that he makes from such intuitive experience. For, "conceptual substitutes for ineffable experiences are not adequate".<sup>76</sup> We have, of course, to recognize that "intuition transcends the conceptual expressions as reality does not fit into categories".<sup>77</sup> When one's intuitive powers are directed towards things—be they concrete entities like objects in the universe, or abstract entities like relations, properties, propositions or whole problems—one knows them immediately, directly and in their entirety. Also, one can be said to know them only when one is actively in that intuitive relation to them. This is the difference. Logically and conceptually we can know only the external world as external to us. But if we know them intuitively the external world itself is no more external to us. If all our knowledge were of an intuitive character, then "the unity between the knower and the known would be perfect and our knowledge complete. In it there is no reference to external objects, no correspondence of an idea with another than itself".<sup>78</sup>

There is one thing about which we have to be clear; this philosophy which is a system of unique insights is not really meant to be a method of knowing the external world; if it were seriously advanced as such it would be nothing short of absurd. In a philosophy such as this knowledge of the world is construed as an extension of the knowledge of the self. "All intuitions are involved in self-knowledge. All growth in knowledge is an elaboration of this instinct, an assimilation of the mind of man to the spirit in him. All experience issues forth from it and rests in it".<sup>79</sup> This kind of intuition, if pushed a little further, will easily lead to the notion of "esse is percipi," but Radhakrishnan does not push it in that direction. Rather, when he encounters the possibilities of subjective idealism lurking in its path, he loses no time in changing its direction so that its goal would now appear to be value rather than anything that savours even mildly of that which he fears and wants to avoid. "The ethical soundness, the logical consistency and the aesthetic beauty of the universe are assumptions for science and logic, art and morality, but are not irrational assumptions. They are the apprehensions of the soul, intuitions of the self quite as rational as faith in the physical world or the intellectual schemes, though not grasped in the

<sup>76</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 96.

<sup>78</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 145.

<sup>77</sup> "Reply to Critics," in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.* p. 794.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

same way.<sup>80</sup> Yet, what we know is not just the value part of things—to say so would amount to surrendering a standpoint boldly taken and tenaciously maintained—but the things themselves; and there is also no suggestion anywhere that things have to be wholly identified with their value. The things that we intuit, on Radhakrishnan's terms, are not such things as are made of our intuitions. Nor is it the case that we know just their value and leave all else unknown, for if we so know them, then we do not know them in "their uniqueness and their indefeasible reality." For Radhakrishnan, the world is objectively there; the value of things is in the self; the being of things is in themselves. Yet the self and the objective world are inseparable. They are both to be traced to a common source. A true vision of the world is possible only for those who have a true vision of the self. The unique feature of Radhakrishnan's point of view is that our insight into the real nature of objects is a reflection, or, better, extension, of our insight into ourselves. Therefore what is visualized here is more than a mere scientific understanding of the nature of the world. He writes: "Intuitive knowledge is proved on our pulses. It is the only kind of absolute knowledge. It is possible only when the individual is fully alive and balanced. We can see truly only when our inner being is harmonized. Intuition is the ultimate vision of our profoundest being".<sup>81</sup>

Again, another matter which the preceding discussion implies has to be specially mentioned. Understanding the world is not an end in itself; it must issue in, as it issues from, the understanding of the self. That would be Radhakrishnan's position. This whole way of thinking, according to which knowledge of the self is essential for the knowledge of the world, reminds us strongly of Schelling, with whom on the subject of the relation between reason and intuition generally Radhakrishnan has much similarity.<sup>82</sup> Knowledge of the world is worthwhile to possess because it has a place in the scheme of self-knowledge and of the perennial spiritual vision. But for that, the effort to gain understanding of the world would be without meaning

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>82</sup> About Schelling's position, it is written, "Natural Science and common sense see them (i.e., things) only from the outside; we must know them from the inside, as they are in themselves and for themselves, and that we can do only by knowing ourselves."—F. Thilly and L. Wood, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 471.

and relevance. Professor E.A. Burtt calls attention to the same fact when he writes, "For this whole way of thinking—so axiomatic to the East and so puzzling to the West—the most important matter for man to be concerned about is not the attainment of logical precision in his use of language or power of prediction of external events, valuable as these external accomplishments are."<sup>83</sup>

What then is the most important matter? Professor Burtt answers that it is to "realize the conditions of dependable happiness," which requires "self-understanding" and "such radical transformation of the self as overcomes the paralyzing inner conflicts and the usually disturbing hostilities between the self and others." "From this point of view, the significant use of intellect and its tools lies, of course, in the role it is equipped to play in this process of self-transformation." The point is well taken but it would be easier to link it up with the philosophy of Radhakrishnan if in the place of "self-transformation" we could use "self-realization". The latter term would be more in line with our philosopher's thought.

This much discussion is enough for the problem of rational intuition, and we must turn to the problem of the intuition of feeling, which is also, like the former, a type of empirical intuition. Both of them must be taken together in order to gain a full knowledge of empirical reality.

#### INTUITION OF FEELING

Radhakrishnan is very clear in his mind that there are aspects of empirical reality that peculiarly respond to feeling. As Bradley and others have pointed out, intuition by its nature is closer to feeling than to reason, and therefore it is even possible to be led away into the conclusion that intuition is solely a matter of feeling. Though the latter is not the case, intuitions have a certain special relation to feeling, and feeling is absolutely necessary for the knowledge of things. The primitive immediacy which is experienced at the level of sense-perception is not completely broken up even when intellect supervenes, though it is perfectly right to say that the immediacy of intuition "is not the un-

<sup>83</sup> E. A. Burtt, "Intuition in Eastern and Western Philosophy," in *Philosophy East and West*, January 1953, p. 290.

conscious immediacy of sensation".<sup>84</sup> As Radhakrishnan would say, it is "direct experience, *aparokṣānubhūti*," "not to be confused with vague sentiency below the level of relations;" rather "it is wisdom which is sublimated knowledge, *Jñānam Vijnāna Sahitam*".<sup>85</sup> But intellect is not enough." (It) should be supplemented by the other sides of consciousness if it should reach its end. Man's whole consciousness is needed to reach, to feel the central reality".<sup>86</sup> The need for knowledge through feeling partly arises from the inscrutability of the universe in terms of understanding. There must be some way whereby we can put ourselves in relation with the universe, as we are aware of the limitation of finite understanding. Radhakrishnan agrees with Bradley that there are problems that are inexplicable and insoluble by means of finite intellect, for example, the relation of a finite centre of experience to other centres and to the whole. Moreover, a universe which would reveal its secret essence to a finite intellect would be a poor substitute for the actual one.

As a matter of fact the notion that we apprehend reality through something more than reason alone belongs to a long and respected tradition in both Western and Eastern Philosophy. Essence and Existence were the two postulates of Western philosophy from the beginning. But while in Western Philosophy the significance of existence had been considerably lowered since the time of the cartesian revolution as a result of the notion of static changelessness that was substituted for all other views of the universe, in Indian Philosophy, existence has all along retained its pre-eminence. It was Bergson and the philosophers of emergent evolution that strove to change the cartesian trend in Western Philosophy in this regard. Professor John Wild writes:

The return to the existential categories of individual substance, genuine casual relations and continuous change was certainly salutary. But it was unfortunately often combined with anti-intellectualism which held that human reason was incapable of grasping these existential facts, being limited to the apprehension of universal, changeless essences.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> K. C. Varadachari, "What is Intuition according to Tagore, Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo" in *The Aryan Path*, August 1935, p. 497.

<sup>85</sup> "Reply to Critics," (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 794.

<sup>86</sup> *The Reign of Religion*, p. 207.

<sup>87</sup> John Wild in *Essays in East-West Philosophy*, edited by Charles A. Moore, p. 266.

The reason why Radhakrishnan assumed in his earlier days the role of a critic of Bergson was that he feared that the latter's view often leaned heavily towards anti-intellectualism. It is true that we draw intuition from the order of the primitive life of feeling and instinct, but drawing such intuition itself is a work in which the intellect has a part to play.<sup>88</sup> As we have observed on an earlier occasion, in places Radhakrishnan's own writings express ideas that are hardly distinguishable from those which we have come to associate with the so-called anti-intellectualism of Bergson, and which Radhakrishnan in his enthusiasm of younger days had taken upon himself to assail.<sup>89</sup> "Intuitions," he says, "are convictions which arise out of a fullness of life in a spontaneous way, more akin to sense than to imagination or to intellect and more inevitable than both. There is no control over them".<sup>90</sup> The philosopher himself must draw inspiration, in part, from his "psychical inwardness" and "passions." "While it is necessary to insist that a philosopher should not allow his thinking to be disturbed by his passions, no one can be a philosopher whose non-logical sides are not well-developed".<sup>91</sup> Philosophy, to be sure, is rational, but it should not neglect the non-rational side of experience. The experience upon which it draws must be as rich and as comprehensive as possible. The great philosophers of the past were men who had had such experiences and had taken them into account in their thinking. They had "an adequate sense of the vastness of the universe and the mysteries of the soul." "It is a mistake to think that the only qualifications for elucidating truth in the sphere of philosophy are purely intellectual." For in truth "only those whose lives are deep and rich light on the really vital synthesis significant for mankind."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> It is pointed out that Bergson himself distinguishes between two kinds of intuition. Hoffding in his *Modern Philosophers* gives us an acute analysis of two kinds of intuition. The distinction is between "the primal perception involved in the consciousness of life and the urge of basal instincts," which is the starting point of men, and "the more developed intuitive apprehension, which is reached as the goal of intelligence and training."—T. H. Hughes, *The Philosophic Basis of Mysticism*, p. 114.

<sup>89</sup> It has been pointed out by students of Bergson that his doctrine of intuition is not anti-intellectualistic. (See Randall and Buchler, *Op. Cit.* p. 115).

<sup>90</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 180.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Radhakrishnan is at one with Bergson and many other philosophers in recognizing the value of feeling. The main difference between Radhakrishnan and a thinker like Bergson is this: according to the latter, we feel ourselves away into the world, into the primitive underived stream of life, the *élan vital*; while according to the former the world of objects itself is taken up into one's own self. For Bergson, it is the life-force of the universe that persists through changes, being the very soul of change itself; for Radhakrishnan, it is the self that persists. This is a fundamental difference and one that runs very deep. It reveals the difference between the basic metaphysical presuppositions from which each speaks. In many ways they both speak the same language; but they mean very different things in spite of the identity of language. They both proclaim that real knowledge is the result of the unity of the knower and the known. However, in the case of the European sage, by such unity it is implied that the knower finds himself in the known, and the more undivided the known the more integrated the knower becomes. In the case of the Indian thinker, the meaning of this unity is that the known, whether it be a single object or the total universe, finds its concrete reality and uniqueness of existence in the knowledge of the knower. A quotation from Radhakrishnan will exemplify this distinction. He quotes Bergson's famous sentence from his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, which defines intuition as "that kind of intellectual sympathy by which one sets oneself in the interior of an object in order to coincide with the very reality of that object, with its uniqueness etc." Commenting on this, Radhakrishnan says:

To know reality we must become reality. Intuition is an effort to dissolve into the whole, but how is this possible? How can we know anything else than our own consciousness? How can we become one with, or assimilate the duration of the plant or the insect or a fellow-man or the world? How can we place ourselves in the moving currents of other objects? To know reality, the individuality, or the concrete duration of individuality must interpenetrate the being of the knower, but the possibility is that when it comes to consciousness it may get fused with his own duration in one blended whole.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>93</sup> *The Reign of Religion*, p. 190.



This points to a basic difference between Radhakrishnan and Bergson, which pervades the whole of their respective philosophies. It is true, although only partially, that Radhakrishnan in the East and Bergson in the West stand for pretty much the same things. However, when we come to the deeper currents of thought, we will learn that similarity gives way to difference on certain cardinal points. The difference that originates with fundamental presuppositions persists through the entire range of both men's thoughts, but perhaps manifests itself most clearly in their respective visions of how intuition works in the realm of religious consciousness. An observation made by the late Professor J. H. Muirhead elucidates this point very well. Comparing Radhakrishnan with Bergson he writes:

Along with striking resemblances, however, there are equally striking differences in his (Radhakrishnan's) account (as given in *An Idealist View of life*). He agrees as to the directness, objectivity and authority of the intuition. But whereas M. Bergson subordinates the passive and receptive side of the experience to the active, and finds the completion of it in voluntary participation in the onward creative movement of the *élan vital*, Professor Radhakrishnan reverses this order and finds the completion of the active cooperative element of religion in the sense of rest and salvation that come with the consciousness of unity with the whole, as something beyond the reach of time and movement.<sup>94</sup>

Radhakrishnan is critical of Bergson on two counts, which we shall mention and examine below:

(1) *Bergson's anti-intellectualist bias*. If, however, we consider the entire range of Bergson's philosophy, this criticism will appear to be void of substance, and certainly if there is any real anti-intellectualism in Bergson, Radhakrishnan is not the most qualified man to make an issue of it. For, instances are legion in Radhakrishnan's own writings that will scarcely entitle him to be called a supporter of intellectualism. It has been pointed out that it was in his earlier work, *The Reign of Religion*, that he took issue with Bergson more sharply. His critical attitude to Bergson on the score of the latter's "anti-intellectualism" was considerably toned down in his later work, *An Idealist View*,

<sup>94</sup> J. H. Muirhead in *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XXXI, October 1932.

because, by that time, the seeds of thought that had been already germinating in his mind as evidenced by his earlier work had grown into full bloom. A reader who is not especially careful will gather the impression by reading his criticism of Bergson in his earlier work, that the author has adopted there the classical rationalist position. For, a more penetrating study of the book will show that, though the author announces himself as a rationalist and anti-intellectualist, what he is setting up as rationalist position is not really rationalism, but rational intuitionism of the type we have found him to be maintaining, in the foregoing discussion. But in that book the rational intuitionism had not fully developed nor was it articulated properly, so much so, we encounter there a certain juxtaposition between intuitive reason and logical, methodological or conceptual, reason, which marks a stage preceding full maturity in our philosopher.

(2) *Bergson's emphasis on life-force rather than on the self as the essential reality of consciousness.* This we think is a criticism that has a great deal of substance. Intuition, according to Radhakrishnan, is the function of spiritual consciousness and not the work of life-force, nor a quality of duration. It is altogether beyond any concept of time. Intuition for him "is not life but our knowing consciousness keeping in step with the rhythm of duration of the object intuited".<sup>65</sup> Actually, this criticism will also lighten up the real import of the mis-worded, and perhaps misconceived, criticism concerning Bergson's anti-intellectualism. What he really means is that Bergson is not taking sufficient account of the self-conscious self in his doctrine of intuition, but is transferring to life-force the property that belongs truly to the self alone. In actual fact Radhakrishnan should disagree with Bergson only on the point concerning the place of the self in intuition, that is, in so far as for him intuitions are intuitions of the self and not intuitions of life-force or anything of that order.

Now, if we should estimate correctly what Radhakrishnan means by intuition in reference to the two areas of experience that we have mentioned, namely, reason and feeling, we must not fail to perceive that he is opposed to making abstractions out of them. He says that they are both important and belong

<sup>65</sup> *The Region of Religion*, p. 190.

to one another. But "abstract intelligibility and mere craving for satisfaction of human feelings" are both wrong.<sup>96</sup> Reason and feeling are not opposed to each other, it is only their abstractions that are in that kind of opposition.<sup>97</sup>

What is meant is that the two have to be taken together. Reason and feeling will have to complement each other to form the whole of intuition. Intuition imparts being to both intellectual and emotive apprehensions in knowledge. In their togetherness the mind functions fully. That is how we are able to place ourselves "inside of an object". For, after all, it cannot be denied that in intuition there is an aspect of immediate experience which is the province of feeling, and another aspect of cognition which is the province of intellect.

Now, these two elements in intuition, determine, according to the degree to which either of them predominate, the types into which every intuition has to be classified. Thus we have intuition which may be more appropriately called rational or non-rational as the case may be. But both of them are definitely empirical, that is to say, they both belong to the order of finite experience. Radhakrishnan's method in investigating these things is to presuppose the whole and from the standpoint of such a presupposition to examine the parts. That is how he critically examines the different modes of empirical apprehension, such as reason and feeling, and then dialectically brings out the factors of unity between them, which comprises intuition. He seems to follow this method throughout. It can almost be said that he presupposes the answers and then asks the questions. It is not the case that the categories he examines are made to yield the answers he wants. On the other hand, it is only that the method is demanded by the notion of the wholeness of intuition. It is as though only a philosopher who knows the truth can investigate it. One of the results of this procedure seems to be that the reader is led gradually into higher and higher views of reality, to progressively whole forms of truth. Radhakrishnan would however add that a completely unified and wholly integrated empirical experience is not the highest rung in the ladder leading to the vision of reality. There is an yet higher rung, that of mystical experience, towards which empirical experiences must, for their own fulfilment, be ever pressing forward. Yet mystical

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

experience is not a mere extension of empirical experience, even in its most intuitive form. It is something apart. It is not understood as the natural point of culmination that empirical experiences, by integrating their own inner structures towards greater and greater degrees of wholeness, reach.

### MYSTICAL INTUITION

Mystical intuition is the only true destiny of intuitive life. It is the heart of integral experience. Other intuitions draw their essence from it. They must have their face turned towards it for their fulfilment. Other intuitions take mystical intuition for granted. "Even logical knowledge is possible because this highest knowledge is ever present. It can only be accepted as foundational."<sup>98</sup> As for mystic experience, "the experience itself is felt to be sufficient and complete. It does not come in a truncated form demanding completion by something else. It does not look beyond itself for meaning and validity".<sup>99</sup> Radhakrishnan describes this unique fact of mystical intuition in many ways. We can do no better than quote some of his statements to convey some idea of this fact as he perceives it.

About the fact of the experience itself there can be no possibility of doubt, although we may disagree as to what it really means. "However much we may quarrel about the implications of this kind of experience, we cannot question the actuality of the experience itself".<sup>100</sup> Even without having the experience in its profundity, we can and do often have a taste of it in some kinds of empirical awareness.

While the profounder intuitions do not normally occur, milder forms are in the experience of all who feel an answering presence in deep devotion or share the spell which great works of art cast on us. When we experience the illumination of new knowledge, the ecstasy of poetry or the subordination of self to something greater, family or nation, the self-abandonment of falling in love, we have faint glimpses of mystic moods.<sup>101</sup>

It is sovereign knowledge and it not only does not need other proof but constrains acceptance. "It is sovereign in its own

<sup>98</sup> "Fragments of A Confession," in Schilpp, *Op. Cit.* p. 61.

<sup>99</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 92.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93.

right and carries its own credentials. . . . It is beyond the bounds of proof and so touches completeness. It comes with a constraint that brooks no denial".<sup>102</sup> This quality of mystical knowledge is described by the terms, "self-established" (*svatassiddha*), "self-evidencing" (*svasamivedya*), "self-luminous" (*svayamprakāśa*).<sup>103</sup> As such, "it is pure comprehension, entire significance, complete validity".<sup>104</sup> Quoting Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Sūtra*, he tells us that "the insight is truth-filled, or truth-bearing."<sup>105</sup>

Mystical intuition is described as "super-consciousness"<sup>106</sup> distinguished from other intuitions which take place in ordinary consciousness. Here consciousness in the ordinary sense is itself transcended and the mind reaches its true depths. Since man's depths are mysterious to himself, mystical experiences "possess the character of revelation," and accordingly they "occur only at rare intervals."<sup>107</sup> The plunge to the depth of the mind, in other words, the ascent to super-consciousness, accounts for the ecstasy (literally standing out of oneself) that one feels in moments of mystic experience. Human volition, which belongs only to the ordinary level of consciousness, has nothing to do with the occurrence of mystic experiences. They are supernatural experiences where the depth in man responds to the supernatural. So Radhakrishnan says: "We cannot command or continue them at our will. We do not know how or why they occur. They sometimes occur even against our will. Their mode of comprehension is beyond the understanding of the normal, and the supernatural is traced to the supernatural".<sup>108</sup> The supernatural enters the normal constitution of the world by way of the "subliminal self".

These mystical experiences depend on a unique insight and because of the altogether different nature of the experiences, "those who are gifted with the insight tend to regard themselves as the chosen ones, the privileged few." "Conscious of the light which other men had not, they feel inclined to believe that the light has been directed on them and that they are not only the

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93. Cf. Bergson's position: "Super-consciousness is not merely not ruled out by hypothesis; it is established by experience as immediate and as coercive as any other experience as men base deductions upon."—Horace M. Kallen, *Op. Cit.* p. 195.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>106</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 50.

<sup>107</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 94.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

seekers but the sought".<sup>109</sup> The consciousness of being chosen thus comes as a consequence of this experience.

The experience does not leave the individual unaffected. It opens the door to a higher state of being; it gives him a new vision. There are also certain inward experiences, quite distinct from the cognitive, which brings added confirmation to the knowledge of reality that the experience produces.

The tension of normal life disappears, giving rise to inward peace, power and joy. The Greeks called it *ataraxy*, but the word sounds more negative than the Hindu term "*sānti*" or peace, which is a positive feeling of calm and confidence, joy and strength in the midst of outward pain and defeat, loss and frustration. The experience is felt as profoundly satisfying, where darkness is turned into light, sadness into joy, despair into assurance. The continuance of such an experience constitutes dwelling in heaven which is not a place where God lives, but a mode of being which is fully and completely real.<sup>110</sup>

"In addition to the feeling of certitude is found the ineffability of the experience".<sup>111</sup> The mystic experience is "ineffable," for which "conceptual substitutes are inadequate".<sup>112</sup>

Mystical intuition, furthermore, is not to be confused with other functions of the mind, nor even with their totality. Indeed there can be no totality of the other functions of the mind without the mystical being at the centre, as the organizing and life-giving principle. "It is an independent functioning of the mind, something unique, possessing an autonomous character. It is something inward and personal which unifies all values and organizes all personal experiences".<sup>113</sup>

#### *Mystic Experience Posits the Transcendental Reality*

All mystics would agree that mystic experiences reveals the transcendent reality or God, regardless of whether one conceives

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96. Cf. with Otto's position. "Otto says that the numinous, which is his name for religious experience, is felt as being ineffable and incapable of conceptualization."—W. T. Stace, *Time and Eternity*, p. 94. All mystics would agree with this.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88. Cf. with Otto's statement: "For, if there is any single domain of human experience that presents us with something unmistakably specific

of the Divine Being as personal or impersonal. It was William James who said that it is "a postulator of new facts", and that it points to "the presence of a being or reality through other means than the ordinary perceptive processes or reason".<sup>114</sup> Evelyn Underhill also speaks of mysticism as essentially the possibility "first of knowing, finally of attaining Ultimate Reality".<sup>115</sup> Otto, likewise, defines the aim of mysticism as "a real knowledge of, a real personal communion with, a Being, whose nature is yet above knowledge and transcends personality".<sup>116</sup> Radhakrishnan agrees with the mystical tradition all over the world that mystical intuition reveals reality. Mark the following statement of his:

The individual adopts an attitude of faith which is urged by its own needs to posit the transcendental reality. He affirms that the soul has dealings, direct, intimate and luminous, with a plane of being different from that with which the senses deal, a world more resplendent but not less real than the conventional one. The experience is felt as of the nature of a discovery or revelation, not a mere conjecture or a creation. The real was there actually confronting us, it was not conjured out of the resources of our own mind.<sup>117</sup>

The Reality confronting us in mystic experience is objective.

#### *Mystical Intuition in Relation to Other Intuitions*

Now, although mystical intuition is autonomous and unique and although it is pertinent to its own realm of reality, namely, Ultimate Reality, it would be perilous in practice to let it function in isolation from other powers of man. Mystical intuition is the heart and the integrator of all the faculties of man. It cannot afford to neglect empirical ways of knowing.

It would appear that Radhakrishnan now argues that the independence of mystical intuition is only theoretical. The practical reality has to be taken into consideration. For in actual fact pure mystic experience is a rare occurrence. If, on the contrary,

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and unique, peculiar to itself, assuredly it is that of the religious life."—*The Idea of the Holy*, p. 4. Otto insists that mystic experience is *sui generis*.

<sup>114</sup> Cited by J. B. Pratt in *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 337.

<sup>115</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>116</sup> Rudolf Otto, *op. cit.* p. xvii

<sup>117</sup> *An Idealist view of life*, p. 95

it were the only type of experience we have, then, because of its intrinsic validity (*svatahprāmānya*) the distinction between truth and falsehood would not arise.<sup>118</sup> But the fact of the matter is "even the noblest human minds have had only glimpses of self-valid experiences".<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, "the moments of vision are transitory and intermittent" even for those privileged few who attain it. "We therefore do not attain an insight, permanent and uninterrupted, where reality is present in its own immediate witness," although ideally such a state of affairs is not impossible.<sup>120</sup>

The experience itself is real; it is the starting point. Mankind lives on the spiritual capital of the stored-up experiences of a few individuals, who have had fleeting visions of the Ultimate. Yet these experiences have become part of the funded knowledge of man. If they have to be useful they have to become knowledge in a larger sense. Now knowledge in this larger sense is both historical and social. The beginnings of such transformation is made by the responsible mystic soon after the ineffable experience has passed.

So long as the experience lasts, the individual remains wrapt in contemplation, but no man rests in that state for a long time. Life is a restless surge. Scarcely is the seer assured of the unique character of the experience than he is caught in the whirlpool of desire and temptation, discord and struggle. During the vision, its influence was so potent and overwhelming that he had neither the power nor the desire to analyse it. Now that the vision is no more he strives to recapture it and retain in memory what cannot be realised in fact. The process of reflection starts.<sup>121</sup>

The foundations for knowledge as historical is thus laid in oneself. The transient nature of mystical intuitions mean also the possibility of the individual himself doubting it as the reality and the vividness of the experience fade away with the passage of time. For this reason a man must use the power of reason to preserve the experience from doubt for ever and to prove it to himself. As it is, all our experiences are not adequately intuited at once; hence doubt arises. Therefore, "the pedestrian function

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.



of consolidation and revaluation seems to be indispensable".<sup>122</sup> Knowledge has to be social, that means, communicable. The mystic, who expects to share with others the vision that he has gained, must share the doubt of others. Doubt is transcended only by reason. In other words reason has to be the link between his vision and others' ignorance. Emphasizing both the historical and social nature of this knowledge, Radhakrishnan writes: "The only way to impart our experiences to others and elucidate their implications for the rest of our life and defend their validity against hostile criticism is by means of logic".<sup>123</sup> (By logic is here clearly meant reason).

Reason is useful not only in storing, transmitting and communicating the mystic vision but also in analysing the report of seers, nay, even the forms of one's own experience. Here then reason performs a critical and discriminatory function. The report of others is clothed in propositions as self-report is clothed at least in some psychological forms. "When we test the claim of the experience to truth, we are really discussing the claims of the forms or propositions in which the nature of the experience is unfolded".<sup>124</sup> "In the utterances of the seers, we have to distinguish the given and the interpreted elements".<sup>125</sup> Again, "there is no such thing as pure experience, raw and undigested. It is always mixed up with layers of interpretation. The alleged immediate datum is psychologically mediated".<sup>126</sup> All testimonies of spiritual experiences, including the scriptures, are "a that-what". "The that is merely the affirmation of a fact, of self-existent spiritual experience in which all distinctions are blurred and the individual seems to overflow into the real and belong to it. The experience is real though inarticulate".<sup>127</sup> Furthermore reason is needed to go behind the symbols of religious expression and to interpret them meaningfully. "The profoundest wisdom of the past is transmitted to us in the form of myths and metaphors which do not have any fixed meaning and therefore can be interpreted as life requires".<sup>128</sup> We have to go behind the words to the moods they symbolize.

Finally, we come to realize that empirical knowledge is by no means opposed to mystical intuition. The former refers to particular matters of fact, the rational and feeling aspects of

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, p. 99.<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 99.<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 97.

things, events, relations, structures etc.; while the latter refers to the conditions for knowing them. The Ultimate is not a fact among facts, but the truth underlying all facts. The Truth of mystical experience is not in competition with empirical facts, there is no clash. "The empirical understanding is quite competent within its own region, but it cannot be allowed to criticise its foundation, that which it, along with other powers of man, takes for granted. The Supreme is not an object presented to knowledge but the condition of knowledge".<sup>129</sup>

### INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE

Integral experience is the fulness of mystical intuition, reason and feeling. It is visualized as the completion of all of them, in their togetherness and integrity. As such it is religious experience in the highest and completest sense. It is the fulfilment of mysticism. Now there are three aspects in this fulfilment and completion of mysticism by integral experience. (1) In the place of mystical intuition, we have the whole of the person's powers, including mystical intuition and organized around it. (2) In the place of the Absolute Beyond, we have the Absolute conceived as the unity of the Beyond and the universe. (3) In the place of objectivity or otherness, we have the integrity of subject and object. All these are really aspects of the problem of transcendence and immanence. The first is epistemological; the second and the third form the base of the metaphysical construction. The first pertains to the unity of the knowing apparatus; the other two to the unity of Being.

#### A. *The Unity of the Apparatus of Knowledge: The Whole of the Person's Powers—Synthesis of Continuity and Discontinuity*

Mystical intuition by definition is autonomous and is not necessarily in touch with the other powers of the mind. Integral Insight, which is mystical apprehension in the largest possible sense, on the other hand, "brings into activity not merely a portion of our conscious being, but the whole."<sup>130</sup> Mystical experience has to become integral experience. Integral experience, unlike mystical experience, is not sheer discontinuity, but the unity of

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>130</sup> *Fragments of a Confession*, (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 60.

continuity and discontinuity, and therefore going above both, a synthesis of the two. By the whole of a person's powers is not meant merely the continuous totality of the faculties of man, bound together by the underlying unity of immanent intuition present in them all, but a synthetic unity of that totality with the essentially discontinuous mystical faculty.

It is like the gestaltic unity where the whole precedes and determines the parts; but rather more, because it is the whole plus the parts which are wholes themselves though not in their own right. It is a higher kind of whole which includes the whole and the parts.<sup>131</sup> Thus Radhakrishnan gives a much more important place to reason and feeling than advocates of similar positions generally do.

Particularly with regard to mysticism, this theory that binds continuity and discontinuity in one seems very original and fruitful. Mystical experience, truly defined, must imply a break with the normal experiences of man; but if it does imply a break it is difficult to see how it can be meaningful to man, how we can even talk about it, how it really can contribute to knowledge. This has constituted a very serious problem for all who are willing to consider mystical experience as one of the data for philosophy. We have noted that mystical experience itself has to be related to reason and the normal faculties of man. The problem of *how* it can be done has to be faced. Again mystics themselves have to face the question of how mystical experience, which by definition is supernormal, can be attained by training. The "leap" of mysticism from the normal to the supernormal has also to be seen as a "growth".<sup>132</sup>

The differentia of integral experience is to be perceived not only in the process of attainment but also in the state of attainment. There has to be a reconciliation or harmonization of infinity and finitude, eternity and time. Pure mystical experience will disregard the finite and the temporal altogether, but not so integral experience. In this sense integral experience represents the ideal of *jivan-mukti*. "Man is a being who is straining towards infinity, in quest of eternity, but the condition of his existence, finite and limited, causes the suffering. When he attains integrality there is harmony in his life and the expression is joy."<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup> See *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 264-266.

<sup>132</sup> Fragments of a Confession (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 61. <sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 61-62.

### B. *The Unity of Being*

The unity of Being includes two things, as already noted, (1) the unity of the absolute "Beyond" and visible nature or the universe, and (2) the unity of "the Other" and the self (or object and subject). The concepts of transcendence and immanence are common to both. "The Beyond" implies a contrast with the world; "the Other" implies a contrast with the self of man.

It should be noted that what Radhakrishnan sets out to do is not to bind "the Beyond" and the Universe together by reducing them both to a common, neutral reality and to combine the objective "Other" and the subjective self in a common Ego.<sup>134</sup> What he does try to do is to point to the possibility of transcending the duality of transcendence and immanence in both cases, and more specifically, in the case of the latter, of transcending the duality of objectivity and subjectivity. Thus we have a unity of "the Beyond" and the Universe and a unity of "the Other" and the self. The two unities are to be regarded as perspectives of the same unity; and this unity can only be called by the name "Spirit"; it is Spirit in the true sense. "Besides the affirmations of a spiritual reality which is variously interpreted and its consubstantiality with the deepest self of man, we also have the conviction of the unity of the universe. We see one Spirit overreaching us." This is the foundation for the "religion of the spirit".

### *The Unity of "the Beyond" and the Universe*

Radhakrishnan sees the universe as immanent spirit. The materiality or actuality of the universe in no way contradicts its spirituality; for the latter comprehends the former. Seeing the universe as spirit is seeing it whole while seeing it as matter is seeing it partially, and the partial is wrong. Spirit is not opposed to matter, for it includes matter. The question is asked, "If the universe is essentially spirit, how do we account for its appearance as non-spirit?" Likewise if integral experience challenges us to "the joyful awareness of the universe as harmony," how do we explain "the tension, the discord and the cleavage in the universe"? Radhakrishnan answers his own questions thus:

<sup>134</sup> Recall Fichte's idealism

The world of science and common sense seem so different from the freedom of the self. Is it an illusion or is it a reality? Those who are pragmatically inclined take the practical life as reality and treat spiritual experiences as a mere dream, so deep seem to be the division between them. Some of the more careful trace the appearance of the multiple universe to the limitations of human intelligence, avidyā, nescience. The human mind, being what it is, tries to reconstruct the universe from the intellectual point of view into an organic whole. For the intellect, the unity is only a postulate, an act of faith. For the spirit, the harmony is an experienced reality.<sup>135</sup>

We see partially because we use only a part of our self in apprehending the universe. Integral experience will show that the universe is spirit. Then, "the earth and the sky, the world and animals, all become suddenly strange and wonderful. For our eyes are opened and they all declare the presence of the one Supreme. The universe seems to be alive with spirit, aglow with fire, burning with light."<sup>136</sup> As the *Chāndogya Upanishad* declares, we will see spirit "above, below, behind, before, to the right and to the left."<sup>137</sup>

Radhakrishnan makes a clear-cut distinction between the universe as apprehended by the scientist and as apprehended by the mystic. The former apprehends only through reason and sense and therefore not truly. "The truth of the universe is not a mathematical equation or a kinematical system or a biological adjustment or an ethical individualism, but a spiritual organism."<sup>138</sup> "Other views may be clearer than that of the world as spirit and yet it is this mysterious, unclear and inarticulate knowledge that brings us closest to reality."<sup>139</sup> "In truth the pulse of the spirit throbs through nature."<sup>140</sup> In Radhakrishnan's view all grades of being are conscious. It is this fact that underlies our rational and sense intuitions of empirical realities. "All being is consciousness and all consciousness is being."<sup>141</sup> He regards unconscious matter like unconscious life as an abstraction. Matter which is the subject of scientific study or common perception is an abstraction and no concrete reality.<sup>142</sup> What we

<sup>135</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 110.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

call discretely as matter, life or consciousness in the ordinary sense are "ideal constructions or grades of experience".<sup>143</sup>

It is noteworthy that Radhakrishnan's thought bears a close resemblance to Tagore's in this respect, and may in some ways have been even influenced by it. It was characteristic of Tagore to see the universe or nature as a spiritual spectacle. The idea of the spiritual universe was the core of Tagore's mysticism. Radhakrishnan, who has written a book on Tagore, observes as follows: "The poetic temper hears the voice of the spirit crying aloud in nature."<sup>144</sup> "Rabindranath (Tagore) has the eye which pierces into the secret of which the natural fact is a sign and a prophecy. . . . The spiritual phases of nature leaping to his God-filled eyes, kindle devotion in his heart and set song on his lips. . . . To him the touch of an infinite mystery passes over the trivial, making it break out into ineffable music."<sup>145</sup> "He (Tagore) can never escape the divine presence, twist and turn as he will. The deep shadows of the rainy July and the stormy night suggest God's presence."<sup>146</sup> Finally, "he (Tagore) has a positive view of the relation of spirit to nature. The two are aspects of the Absolute."<sup>147</sup> Radhakrishnan tells us that we "must contemplate the world of immanent divinity." "The infinite then will murmur its secret to our ears."<sup>148</sup>

We must not also fail to notice that Radhakrishnan's thought on the subject of the universe betrays very strong affinities with the thought of Schelling and the German romanticists. It is truly said of Schelling that he "broadens the conception of spirit, mind or reason, so as to include the unconscious, instinctive, purposive force that manifests itself in inorganic and organic nature, etc."<sup>149</sup> "The complete theory of Nature," writes Schelling, "would be that by virtue of which the whole of Nature should be resolved into an intelligence."<sup>150</sup> It should also be noted that "Schelling's insight that nature is visible spirit, and spirit invisible nature, gave an impetus to the romantic imagination and encouraged the new poets to endow the world with life and mind, and to view with a living sympathy which they could

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>144</sup> *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, p. 19.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>149</sup> F. Thilly and L. Wood, *Op. Cit.* p. 467.

<sup>150</sup> Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Translated by Benjamin Rand, included in B. Rand, *Modern Classical Philosophers*. See p. 537.

not feel in the presence of a dead machine."<sup>151</sup> It is no wonder then that Radhakrishnan's view of nature has much in common with the romantic view, European or Indian. However, we must be warned against concluding that there is a total identity between Radhakrishnan's philosophy of nature and romanticism; that would be a fallacy. In the last analysis the standpoint of integral experience from which Radhakrishnan proceeds makes his view of nature distinctive. Particularly, it must be remembered that for him the absolute is not just the immanent totality of the universe conceived as spirit; it is also "the Beyond".

*The Unity of "the Other" and the Self*

Here we are considering transcendence in the sense of otherness, the contrast with the self being assumed. Radhakrishnan is an advocate of the otherness of God just as he is an advocate of his beyondness. Yet as beyondness is complemented by the immanence of the spirit in nature, so the otherness of God has to be complemented by the idea of a God of subjectivity, or that of God indwelling in man in the proper sense of the term, seeing that indwelling can never mean dwelling inside the psychosomatic organism, but dwelling in the subjective being of man. "While the fulness of spiritual being transcends our categories, we are certain that its nature is akin to the highest kind of being we are aware of. If the real were entirely transcendent to the self of man it would be impossible for us to apprehend even dimly its presence. We would not be able to say even that it is "wholly other".<sup>152</sup> So we have to see that "there is in the self of man, at the very centre of his being, something deeper than intellect, which is akin to the Supreme."<sup>153</sup> It is this fact that makes divine revelation possible. "God's revelation and man's contemplation seem to be two sides of one fact. . . . There is a real ground in man's deepest being for the experience of reality."<sup>154</sup> This fact is the apriori basis of all spiritual experience. "The consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God is the conviction fundamental to all spiritual wisdom. It is not a matter of inference only. In the spiritual experience itself the barriers between the self and the ultimate reality drop away. In the moments of its highest insight the self becomes aware not only of its own existence

<sup>151</sup> F. Thilly and L. Wood, *Op. Cit.* p. 467.

<sup>152</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 103.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

but of the existence of the omnipresent spirit of which it is, as it were, a focussing."<sup>155</sup> This he feels is the meaning of the great text of the Upanishad, *Tat tvam asi* (That art Thou).

Rudolf Otto, the great spokesman of "the wholly other," distinguishing it from a certain usual conception of the absolute with which it is often confused, declares that it completely transcends man's subjective being in these words:

The absolute exceeds our power to comprehend; the mysterious wholly eludes it. The absolute is that which surpasses the limits of the understanding, not through its actual qualitative character, for that is familiar to us, but through its formal character. The mysterious on the other hand, is that which lies altogether outside what can be thought, and is alike in form, quality and essence, the utterly and wholly other.<sup>156</sup>

On the face of it Radhakrishnan's position and Otto's, as depicted here, seem inevitably to polarize themselves into diametrically opposite standpoints; and no reconciliation seems possible. But as we have discussed already, Radhakrishnan goes a long way with Otto in conceiving God as "the wholly other". Radhakrishnan declares that both the Upanishads and Śāṅkara also testify to the otherness of God.<sup>157</sup> "This is the expression of a profound religious intuition."<sup>158</sup> But he seems to demand, as a logical need, a basis for otherness, if we have to meaningfully speak of "the Other" at all. Utter transcendence over the self would make it impossible for us even to say that God is "the wholly Other". Otherness, therefore, needs somehow to be absorbed into the self, that is, self so conceived as to include itself and "the Other", if the sense of "the Other" or numinous awareness is to be regarded as legitimate.

From logic we are led to metaphysics. "We generally identify ourselves with our narrow limited selves and refer to spiritual experience as something given or revealed to us, as though it did not belong to us."<sup>159</sup>

It is true that in mystical experience as such the polarity

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>156</sup> R. Otto, *Op. Cit.* pp. 145-146.

<sup>157</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 101.

<sup>158</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 240.

<sup>159</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 101.



between the self and "the Other" is felt to be real and valid. But in the higher order of mystical experience, which is here presented as integral experience, it will be transcended. Mystical experience posits the otherness of God, as it postulates the absolute contrariness to "the Other" of the self. Here God is known as a mystery. The numinous experience of God as mystery postulates to the intellect the paradoxical proposition that that which is absolutely contrary to "the Other" somehow also knows "the Other," Radhakrishnan maintains the position that all knowledge is through identity, in which the knower and the known are one. If this position is accepted, then, the apprehension of "the Other" would require that that which knows it must be identical with it, and so logically otherness cancels itself out. But mystical experience as such is not a state where non-paradoxical or positive identity of the knower and the known is possible. The paradoxical is transcended only in integral experience. In mystical experience the empirical state of the self is assumed. To the empirical, God is the "wholly Other". As the Hindu mystic tradition sees it, intellectually, only the most negative descriptions can be given to it. "The negative account is intended to express the soul's sense of the transcendence of God, the "wholly Other", of whom naught may be predicated save in negatives. . . . When we call it nothing we mean that it is nothing that created beings can conceive and not that it is nothing absolutely."<sup>100</sup> Now the spirit alone can comprehend "the Other" and the God of subjectivity in one.

#### *The Doctrine of Avatāra*

As a corollary to the conception of the self as spirit is Radhakrishnan's theory of the possibility of *avatāra* (descent of the divine). Speaking of Kṛṣṇa, as an example of *avataraṇa*, he says, "The teacher, who is interested in the spiritual illumination of the race, speaks from the depths of the divine in him. Kṛṣṇa's *avatāra* is an illustration of the revelation of the Spirit in us, the Divine hidden in gloom."<sup>101</sup> Again, "The Lord abides in the heart of every creature and as the veil of that secret sanctuary is withdrawn, we hear the Divine voice, receive the Divine light, act in Divine power. The embodied human consciousness is

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>101</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 35.

lifted into the unborn eternal."<sup>102</sup> Quoting the *Bhāgavata*, Radhakrishnan writes, "at midnight, in the thickest darkness, the Dweller in every heart revealed himself in the divine Devaki, for the Lord is the self hidden in the hearts of all beings."<sup>103</sup> In truth, every conscious being is such a descent. But, "there is a distinction between the self-conscious being of the Divine and the same shrouded in ignorance."<sup>104</sup>

### *C. Integral Experience a Critique of Mystic Experience and Religion*

Lastly, we must consider what integral experience is as an epistemological theory. All along we have discussed it as a theory of complete knowledge of complete reality. Thus it is presented as a fuller mysticism. Does it stand for an actual, positive experience we can attain or for an ideal of experience, which even though not attainable, is valuable as a standard of criticism? By way of anticipating the conclusion that we will arrive at at the end, we may say that the better way to look at integral experience is as a theory and not as an experience. It is to be regarded as a critique of mystic experience and of religion as such. It is a critique from the inside, as Kant's critique of reason was from the inside. We will recall that it was observed in the beginning that Kant and Radhakrishnan are moved by identical purposes with regard to their respective subject-matters: Kant to lead metaphysics to the safe road of science, and Radhakrishnan to lead religion to the relatively safe road of metaphysics. But one important difference is to be noted: while Kant was impressed by the limits of reason for the subject-matter of metaphysics, Radhakrishnan is impressed by the unlimited power of mysticism for knowledge of reality. Only, he says, we must have a fuller ideal of mysticism than available in standard configurations of mysticism. This difference is decided by the very real difference in the approach of the two thinkers to the possibility of metaphysics.

Integral experience is to be regarded as a new metaphysics of religion. The question as to whether it is to be taken as purely an intellectual construction or as a method of experience, of attainment, will remain to be answered.

It could also be seen as a rather penetrating study of consciousness, with religious consciousness treated as the centre or the heart of consciousness. The theory will be very valuable if

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

taken in the sense of integral consciousness (a distinction between consciousness and experience, as applied to religion as in other respects, will be extremely valid). Perhaps too close an association with, and indebtedness to, historical religious faiths as well as personal inclination may have made Radhakrishnan often to regard integral experience as a method of spiritual realization. Apart from its doubtful role as a method of spiritual realization, the theory is extremely valuable as a critique of religion. Such a critique forms the foundation for a new articulation of the religion of the spirit. We shall talk about Radhakrishnan's conception of the religion of the spirit directly. But prior to that we shall try to see something about the bearing of integral experience as a metaphysics of religion, on integral experience as self-evident knowledge.

Epistemologically, integral experience is an elaboration of the principle of self-evidence of the subject as traditional Vedanta understands it. It is clear that, logically, the classical formulation has advantages over the new formulation of Radhakrishnan's because contradiction of the former would involve contradiction of logic, at least if there is a prior resolution to accept the logic that Vedanta presupposes. At the same time, it can be said that Radhakrishnan's position is somewhat less vulnerable than it would have been, because he looks at self-evidence from a religious point of view, not a logical one. He looks at Vedanta itself as religion rather than as logic or even philosophy and in that way he is entirely right in ignoring in his philosophical construction the logic-chopping of many a post-Śāṅkarite schoolman and in focussing his attention on the distinctly religious question.

In doing this Radhakrishnan is bringing to light again an authentic tradition. But the conclusiveness of self-evidence claimed for integral experience is as open to question as any formulation of self-evidence; and furthermore, like all approaches to religious truth, it seems to continue to need faith to rest on. But as a problematic of religious knowledge it is of unquestionable value. Radhakrishnan has raised the question of self-evidence in a fresh manner. He bids us all reconsider the negative dogmatism which insists that the unconditioned reality is unknowable. He shows us that the question is not settled once for all and that it cannot be so settled. Integral experience may not be accepted by us exactly as positive epistemology, but still it must be accepted

as a new problematic of the knowledge of reality. As to acceptance or non-acceptance of this position as positive epistemology, we may perhaps bear in mind Schelling's opinion that philosophy after all cannot demonstrate idealism any more than it can prove dogmatism or materialism, for man's world-view is his free choice.

#### D. *The Religion of the Spirit*

Integral experience as metaphysics of religion primarily aims at religious knowledge. It is essentially a theory of the religion of the spirit as against the religion of dogma or authority. A considerable part of Radhakrishnan's writings directly bears on this question. There is a detailed discussion of it in "A Fragment of a Confession".<sup>165</sup> It also deals with the cognate question of Religion as distinguished from religions, meaning universal religion as different from particular religious traditions.

#### *The Inner Essence of Religion and the Formal Structure*

Radhakrishnan makes a significant distinction between the inner essence of religion and the outward, formal structure of religion, which consists in beliefs, creeds, practices, rituals and codes. The distinction made here pervades all his thinking, not only on religion, but also on science, art, ethics etc.

#### *Symbolism the Beginning of Formal Structure*

In apposition to this, Radhakrishnan makes a distinction between "*Śruti* or the Vedas, which is independent of any purely human mode of thought, and *Smṛti* or tradition, which is based on reasoning and interpretation".<sup>166</sup> The idea is that *Śruti* expresses the inner essence of religion, while *Smṛti* stands for the formal development of theology, cultus, codes and the symbols of religious faith.

The former is direct expression of realized truth which proceeds exclusively from the self, which is uncreated and uncreatable. These utterances are supra-individual, universal, divine. They are direct and not discursive. *Anubhava* or direct experience, active participation in the eternal truth, is distinguished from the indirect and passive participation in religious knowledge by belief. In the case of integral insight, the

<sup>165</sup> Schilpp. *Op. Cit.* pp. 60-ff.

<sup>166</sup> *Recovery of Faith*, p. 151.

individual does not possess knowledge as an individual but participates in his innermost essence, which is not distinct from the divine principle. The metaphysical certitude is absolute because the knower and the known are identical. This is *jāna* the most perfect union between God and man.<sup>167</sup>

Even in *Śruti* the beginnings of formal expression are to be noted, although integral experience is its basis. As an expression of integral experience, it "communicates what is self-evident and certain through symbolical means, which awakens in the reader or hearer the latent knowledge which he bears unconsciously and eternally within him".<sup>168</sup> "It makes use of rational modes", although "only as symbols to describe or translate absolute knowledge possessing a greater degree of certainty".<sup>169</sup> Integral experience is one and undifferentiated. It cannot be expressed in any one symbolic formula. "The real has been conceived in many ways through religious symbolism."<sup>170</sup> The different symbolic representations bring out different aspects of the immensity of the Supreme."<sup>171</sup> It is, again, an interesting thing about Radhakrishnan's idea of the Supreme truth that that which is undifferentiated and indescribable must be regarded as identical with that which is described in an infinite variety of ways.

The religious scriptures of the world are all, like the Vedas, originally based on integral experience.<sup>172</sup> Integral experience is not faith or revelation but higher knowledge.<sup>173</sup> All scriptures are said to be timeless, meaning "that the insight into the one reality is timeless in origin and unaffected by the human need for diversity of expression".<sup>174</sup> The Vedas are said to be eternal; so are all the scriptures of mankind. But, "what is timeless is not the literary documents but the wisdom which is available to men of awareness at all times."<sup>175</sup> This he feels is the truth behind the vedantic contention that the scriptures are *apauruṣeya* (impersonal). The impersonality stands for universality. "The inward appropriation of this wisdom may occur in place and time, which may have a great deal to do with the shaping in

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, p. 151.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, p. 151.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, p. 151.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, p. 153.

<sup>172</sup> *Occasional Speeches and Writings*, p. 256.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, p. 251.

<sup>174</sup> *Recovery of Faith*, p. 151.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, p. 152.

words of these insights".<sup>176</sup> But, "spiritual truth is far greater than the scriptures."<sup>177</sup> "Godhead can be described and appropriated in various ways."<sup>178</sup> But the important thing is the truth, not the way. For, "when the truth is attained, the way falls away."<sup>179</sup> "The way" stands for the formal structures, both rational as well as technical; "the truth" stands for the inner essence.

*The Concealment of Universal Religion by the Formal Structures*

In order to reach universal religion, which is the same as the religion of the spirit, we have to cross the barriers of the formal structures of religious faiths. "However perfect and final the revelation may be when once it enters the realms of human apprehension, it is subject to all imperfections of the human mind".<sup>180</sup> "The variety of symbolism is due, not to the nature of the experience, but to the prevailing theological or metaphysical conceptions of time and place."<sup>181</sup> And "these colour the expectation of the seer and forms the background through which he interprets his illumination." However, "it is wrong to exaggerate the doctrinal differences, overlooking the common basis, the universal fact underlying the historical formulations."<sup>182</sup> "Symbols and dogmas are not definitions."<sup>183</sup> Radhakrishnan brings to bear upon the problem the wisdom of the Eastern forms of religion, which "hold that the differences of interpretation do not affect the one universal truth any more than differences of colours affect the uncoloured light which is transmitted".<sup>184</sup> "To claim finality or infallibility for human pictures of reality is to claim for man what belongs to God."<sup>185</sup> However, "the diversity of dogmatic interpretation tends to diminish as we climb the ladder of spiritual perfection."<sup>186</sup> The formal structures of religion are means that we adopt either for the rational understanding and expression or for the technical realization of the one Supreme truth. "The Upanishads are clear that the flame is the same even though the types of fuel used may vary. Though the cows are of many colours, their milk is of one colour; the truth is one like the milk though the forms used are many like the cows."<sup>187</sup>

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, p. 152.

<sup>177</sup> *Occasional Speeches and Writings*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, p. 257.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, p. 266.

<sup>180</sup> *Recovery of Faith*, p. 154.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

<sup>187</sup> *Occasional Speeches and Writings*, p. 258.

*The Import of Integral Experience for the Empirical Realms of Science, Art and Ethics*

The distinction between inner essence and formal structure pertaining to the subject-matter of religion is also applicable to the realms of empirical knowledge. A connection has already been postulated between integral experience and the empirical species of knowledge by purging reason and feeling of the purely discursive and the purely sensual or instinctual. The latter are re-absorbed into the integral by energizing the truly intuitive element in them. Integral experience as the basis of religious apprehension has an import for empirical knowledge. It has to be accepted as a radically new starting point for them all, "as the very condition of knowledge," "as the eternal light," which is "the condition of all seeing."<sup>188</sup> It infuses into them the quality of religious knowledge and helps them turn their face towards religion, resulting in a radical change in direction.

## II

### THE APPLICATION OF THE METHOD OF INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE, IN SCIENCE, ART AND ETHICS

Now it is our task to discover how the method of integral experience is applied in the three empirical fields of human knowledge, namely, science, art and ethics, as there is no doubt that Radhakrishnan intends to apply it in all areas of human life. Integral experience binds them all to itself and therefore with one another. The problem of discovering a relation that runs through science, art and ethics has worried many thinkers, as there is a systematic demand to reduce them to a common universe of discourse. It would appear that Radhakrishnan has some interesting suggestions to offer although these are not developed into any definite scheme or body of proposals and although they may not be acceptable to a majority of thinkers. It was already mentioned in the previous part of this chapter that Radhakrishnan makes a radical distinction between the inner truth of science, art and ethics and their outer structure,

<sup>188</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 101.

as he does also in the case of religion. Thus a new basis for unification is already advanced.

Furthermore, parenthetic to this, there is another thing to be noted. The three main empirical fields of knowledge are placed by Radhakrishnan on a ladder of ascent. There is a progressive participation in intuition by them. Science in its ideal condition tends to go over into art. "Scientific discovery is more like artistic creation in its reaching out after new truth."<sup>189</sup> Likewise, art in its perfection merges with ethics. "The superlative winsomeness of a Buddha, etc." are regarded as the highest form of art. Similarly, ethics at its ultimate point links up with religion. Love, the highest in ethics is mentioned as the nearest step to mysticism.<sup>190</sup> An ethics that pretends to stop with itself is regarded by Radhakrishnan as an absurdity, even as art and science cannot be self-contained. *Ahimsā*, the sum of the law (*dharma*), is truly religious at base.

Now to revert to the question of the inner unity of science, art and ethics and of whatever else is cognate with them, we quote a statement of Radhakrishnan's that expresses the idea well:

The cognitive, the aesthetic and the ethical sides of life are only sides, however vital and significant. The religious includes them all. While science comprehends the law that sustains the universe, while art yearns to reveal the beauty that is worked into the world, while morality struggles to reach the goodness the universe is labouring to achieve, while in their perfection these different aspirations merge into one another, in the process itself each seems to be complete, though it is true that true art or philosophy or morality cannot be had without all of them in some degree.<sup>191</sup>

As science falls within the cognitive, this three-fold division would represent science, art and ethics.

#### SCIENCE

Radhakrishnan's treatment of the cognitive problem of science involves a critique of science from the standpoint of integral

<sup>189</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 176.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.



experience. This includes (a) a discussion of the limitations of science as a cognitive enterprise, of science as it is usually conceived and practised; (b) a pointer to the commonly undetected elements of intuition in science suggesting the prospects of an ideal of science that would be closer to integral experience. There is also a side issue, arising from the discussion, of comparison between science and religion, with specific reference to the validity of dogmatic propositions purporting to convey absolute knowledge.

*Limitations of Scientific Knowledge*

Science, Radhakrishnan admits, is a form of knowledge that has got to be reckoned with. But he is also aware that science, as it is commonly understood, resists the efforts to fit it into the pattern of integral experience. It is precisely what practising scientists and philosophers of science consider as science's unique and distinctive nature that presents itself as a difficulty for Radhakrishnan. It is this, he feels, that stands in the way of science being reassimilated to integral experience. Radhakrishnan notes that science has certain special characteristics that mark it off from intuitive knowledge as such. Firstly, science is concerned with the knowledge of the general or what is often called "universal" as against knowledge of the individual. Secondly, the scientist's own individuality is ruled out from his role as an investigator of truth. Thirdly, science implies indirect rather than direct knowledge. Fourthly, truth in science is impersonal as in scientific knowledge the observer is independent of, or external to, the object. Fifthly, science is an expression of only a fragment of the self instead of the whole self. The following statements are illustrative of the points made:

"The Greeks laid the foundations of natural science for the European world. To analyse and explore, to test and prove all things in the light of reason, was the ambition of the Greek mind. . . . Plato tells us that the universal or general idea determines the nature of the particular individual and has greater reality than the latter".<sup>102</sup> "Intellectual consciousness is predominantly at work in scientific procedure. . . . By eliminating what is peculiar to the individual science helps us to achieve a standpoint from which to arrange and order the contents of

<sup>102</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 3.

experience in a way that it becomes a common ground for all and makes possible common action".<sup>193</sup> "The truth of Science is independent of the person who holds it. It is so impersonal that often observations are recorded by cameras and measurements are taken by mechanical instruments like clocks. For its purpose science assumes the separation of the mind from the object."<sup>194</sup> "Any two men may hit on the same law of science, as Darwin and Wallace actually did." This is possible, because, unlike art, "science in its ordinary usage is an expression of a fragment of the self."<sup>195</sup>

All this adds up to one thing: scientific knowledge gives us only the formal structure of physical existence and not the whole truth. Hence it is inadequate. Here mark Radhakrishnan's words:

The knowledge obtained by science, through the intellectual processes of observation, experiment and inference, is inadequate. It gives us only the formal structure of existence, especially physical existence, which can be presented by mathematical equations. Even with reference to nature scientific knowledge does not give us the inner truth. The measurable aspects are not the only ones. We may assume the current of electricity, but we do not know what electricity is. The real being of physical existence does not consist in the abstract structure which science succeeds in presenting but in its inner dynamism.<sup>196</sup>

Then Radhakrishnan adds, "the inadequacy of scientific knowledge becomes more apparent when we proceed to living organisms and conscious processes."<sup>197</sup>

#### *Undetected Intuitive Elements in Scientific Procedures*

Radhakrishnan argues that, although the nature of scientific knowledge is what is depicted above, in actual fact, that is, in the procedures of science, there is no complete lack of individuality and there is no thoroughgoing indirectness, externality, detachment or independence. The intuitive elements are present even in scientific cognition.

<sup>193</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 791.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 791.

<sup>195</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 147.

<sup>196</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) pp. 791-792.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 792.

The externality of the individual consciousness to the objects is transcended in the intuitive apprehension. In it there is a complete fusion of the subject and the object. Even in scientific knowledge, it is not altogether absent. The independence of the observer is only an ideal. Even when the camera takes the place of the human observer, it is the observer who has to fix it in position, who has to interpret the result of the exposure. If, at any rate the observer is careless or prejudiced, the whole process becomes a failure.<sup>198</sup>

Science in so far as it is a valid form of knowledge is actually the product of intuitive knowledge. In all intuitive knowledge "man ceases to be an impartial spectator. His whole being is at work not merely observation and inference. It is knowledge by coincidence."<sup>199</sup> In every form of cognition, including scientific, the whole self comes into play,<sup>200</sup> although in some the whole self is not realized or expressed. That is the difference between higher and lower forms of knowledge.

The emphasis in the application of integral experience to science is not at all on the objective method of science itself, but on "the genius" of the man who is engaged in scientific enquiry. Science becomes rather a form of experience for the genius. Genius is described as "extreme sensibility to truth".<sup>201</sup> As such science acquires the qualities of that ideal creation of genius, namely, art. Radhakrishnan cites Poincaré's testimony to show that the true mathematician's mind has an extreme sensibility to the mathematical beauty of the harmony of numbers and forms of geometric elegance and that his aesthetic feeling recognizes the utmost beauty in the most useful combination.<sup>202</sup> The genius has to be distinguished from "the plodding intellectual". "The plodding intellectual, the man without intuition, is a useful worker quite necessary for the world of thought, but the genius is at a different and higher level."<sup>203</sup> On the whole, scientific knowledge in the true sense is regarded by Radhakrishnan as an outreach of religious knowledge.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, p. 792.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 792.

<sup>200</sup> *The Spirit in Man (Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 269; *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 136.

<sup>201</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 176.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, p. 176.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, p. 181.

*Critical Evaluation of Radhakrishnan's View of Scientific Knowledge*

It need not be observed that Radhakrishnan's appraisal of the nature of scientific knowledge is absolutely different from that of scientists and philosophers of science. What he regards as not the essence of science is precisely what they think it is. A few remarks made by Professor F.S.C. Northrop, in the course of discussing Radhakrishnan's thought, are worth reproducing: "Western scientific knowledge does not stop with pure inductive methods and with positivistic immediacy. With the ancient Greeks for the first time an additional, new scientific method and an attendantly different way of knowing was discovered."<sup>204</sup>

This new method is that of indirectly verified, deductively formulated theory, where the postulates of the deductively formulated theory refer not to the entities and relations given inductively with immediacy but to theoretically designated, directly unobservable entities and relations. The remarkable discovery was made that there are factors in human knowledge which are not directly experienced. Nevertheless we can know these factors to exist, because by deducing consequences from the assumptions of their existence and then testing these consequences against the inductively given data of immediacy we can verify the existence or non-existence of the theoretically designated factors indirectly. Einstein has made it clear that this has been the method of Western science since the time of the Greeks.<sup>205</sup>

Northrop asserts that, in Western science, "only the propositions convey the object of knowledge" and that "this follows necessarily from the fact that what the proposition designates is not given with immediacy."<sup>206</sup>

*Comparison between Science and Religion with Reference to the Use of Propositions*

As already become evident, Northrop believes that propositions as symbols are conveyors of scientific knowledge. He would go further and assert that they are containers of knowledge, nay rather they are themselves knowledge. On the other extreme

<sup>204</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 649.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 649-650.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 650.

from Northrop stands Radhakrishnan, who regards propositional knowledge as inadequate and as "temporary resting-places in the search for truth," and to some extent even as distortions. Truth essentially is inexpressible for Radhakrishnan and in the spirit of Lao Tze he regards the expressed truth as no truth.<sup>207</sup>

Northrop argues, "when the proposition alone gives the object of knowledge, then, beliefs expressed in terms of such propositions no longer possess merely verbal significance. To throw all symbolism of the propositions away would be to throw all means of knowing the object of knowledge away. For knowledge of this type, without the propositions there is nothing known."<sup>208</sup> Then he makes the notion stronger by adding, "the symbol is of the essence, and it is literally true that one is saved not by intuition but only by the word."<sup>209</sup> On the other hand, discussing the transient nature of the symbols of science and scientific propositions, Radhakrishnan writes, "Our scientific theories which supersede earlier ones are only links in a long chain of progressive advances likely in time to be themselves transcended. Their only justification is their adequacy for the relevant facts. They are temporary resting places in the search for truth and there is nothing absolute about them."<sup>210</sup> If for Northrop symbols of science are dogmas, for Radhakrishnan they are partial, distorted and transitory expressions of truth, with no absoluteness about them. There is, however, no doubt, in either case a significant deviation from the acceptable idea of the role of symbols and propositions in science.<sup>211</sup> But to criticize either of them or both is not part of our present interest. We are concerned to discover how their views of propositions in science relate to their attitudes to propositions in religion. The matter has also bearing on the question of religious toleration.

Northrop says that because of the use of hypothesis in scientific method, "it happens automatically that different hypotheses concerning its nature not only can be but are often mutually

<sup>207</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 96.

<sup>208</sup> Schilpp. *Op. Cit.*, p. 630.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 651.

<sup>210</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 19.

<sup>211</sup> Professor Nagel regards symbolic systems as "operators". He tells us, "symbolic systems in general, and the theories of modern science in particular, almost invariably contain symbolic constituents which have no representative or descriptive function, but are simply instrumental to an efficient transformation of symbols and are convenient means for making calculations."—E. Nagel, *Op. Cit.*, p. 130.

contradictory." "When beliefs are logically contradictory," he adds, "the acceptance of the one renders toleration of the others impossible." Northrop argues that Western attitude to religious propositions also partakes of the same character as is evidenced, according to his thinking, in the attitude to scientific propositions. Thus he concludes that "the ethical attitude to doctrines other than one's own" in cultures dominated by scientific ways of thinking and intuitive ways of thinking respectively must be different. The difference is apparently a matter of culture, but the nature of cultures is determined by the presence or absence of the scientific way of knowing. Ultimately it is the impartation of science's dominant quality that creates religious dogmatism. This in the last resort is a questionable theory; and not many thinkers will be inclined to favour it. However, Professor Northrop uses it as an argument against Radhakrishnan's doctrine of religious toleration. Parenthetically, toleration for Radhakrishnan does not imply a psychological attitude, although the term might suggest that, but a positive mutual participation in religious knowledge which lies behind all particular religious beliefs, which implies also an attitude of respect for other faiths. Northrop contends that advocacy of toleration is to "impose a theory of value (depending upon its mode of knowing) of one culture upon the domain of another culture".<sup>212</sup> Whereas, Radhakrishnan says, "If for science truth is something we are getting nearer and nearer to as time goes on, for religion it need not be different".<sup>213</sup> Again, "repudiating the claim to absoluteness made for religious propositions, he observes, "Its (religion's) truths are said to be unalterable and our only duty is to defend them. Such truths, if any, belong to heaven; our truths are always provisional and tentative".<sup>214</sup> Radhakrishnan thinks that religion should participate in the attitude of toleration which he believes is characteristic of science.

From this point of view the outward structure of science is not to be despised. If the inner essence of science is to partake of the inner essence of religion, namely, integral experience, the outward structure of religion must partake of the tentativeness and relativity characteristic of the outward structure of science.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, p. 651.

<sup>213</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 19.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

Needless to say that Radhakrishnan and Northrop view the structure of science differently. While Northrop makes the presumed dogmatism of science react unwholesomely on religion, Radhakrishnan wants to make the methodological universality and impersonality of science an object-lesson in practical catholicity for religion.

## 2. AESTHETICS

Aesthetics is a field where clear discrimination between formal structure and material content is especially necessary but uncommonly difficult, considering the very nature of art. Professor T. M. Greene enunciates the distinction in very forceful language thus:

What must be combated in an age of cultural instability such as ours is the attempt to *reduce* art to mere formal beauty and to consider the production and enjoyment of such beauty not only as an end in itself (which it certainly is) but as the only end of art. Just as the true scientist, however great his enthusiasm for logical consistency, is never content merely to play with such concepts and propositions according to the rules of Logic, but seeks to use his reason and his logic for the attainment of scientific truth, so the true artist though enchanted with the beauty which he and others can occasion, is never willing to be a mere creator of beauty but always strives to express in terms of beauty, his interpretation of a wider reality and a richer experience.<sup>215</sup>

Radhakrishnan treats art as a form of integral experience. Following his mode of thought he disregards the formal structure of art; he does not consider it valuable. His sole concern in art is its inner essence, not even the material content in the usual sense, because art is a reflection not so much of objective experience as of the self. In discussing the quality of experience that art is, attention is focussed on the artist himself rather than on his creation.

While writing on aesthetics Radhakrishnan touches upon many themes pertaining to the formal aspects of art and after duly

<sup>215</sup> T. M. Greene, *The Arts and the Art of Criticism*, pp. 233-234.

criticizing them disposes of them. He swiftly turns to the inner meaning of art. There are several terms that appear repeatedly in his treatment of the subject. These are, "fusion", "oneness", "absorption", "creation", "inspiration", "truth", "reality", etc.

A few general characteristics of art and aesthetic experience as distinguished from science are first of all to be noted. (1) The nature of intuition in science and art are significantly different. "In aesthetic experience we have a type of intuitive knowledge, a personal relationship with the object which is essentially different from what is found in intellectual cognition."<sup>216</sup> (2) Aesthetic experience implies a knowledge of the individual; and "works of art express significant individuality";<sup>217</sup> which means primarily individuality of the artist himself. (3) Because the artist himself has individuality and because his work is an expression of his whole self, the work of art also acquires individuality. "Any two men may hit on the same law of science, as Darwin and Wallace actually did, but no two men can ever produce the same work of art, for art is the expression of the whole self, while science in its ordinary usage is the expression of a fragment of the self."<sup>218</sup>

The substance of all this is that artistic work as well as aesthetic perception is an expression of individuality because in it the whole self is at play. The degree of wholeness attributable to the aesthetic value that is produced or perceived is relative to the degree of integration that the self has achieved. "Whether... an object presented is beautiful or ugly can be decided only by men... whose sensibility is trained." "But sensitiveness... is dependent on the degree of the development of the self."<sup>219</sup> "When Emerson says that all poetry is written in the heavens, he means that it is conceived by a self deeper than what appears in normal life."<sup>220</sup>

Now, although Radhakrishnan considers art as individual and as an expression of individuality, he does not forget that the self, of which individuality is a mode, has also another mode, namely universality. On the one hand, he says, "no two

<sup>216</sup> "Reply to Critics," (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 793.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 793.

<sup>218</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 147.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>220</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 793.



men can ever produce the same work of art, for art is the expression of the whole self ...", on the other hand, he writes, "even if art is self-expression, the self that is expressed is not the narrow particular one."<sup>221</sup> "By the practice of *vairāgya* or detachment the artist rises to the calm of the universal spirit."<sup>222</sup> The juxta-position between the universal and particular is evident here. It needs to be observed that this is a perennial problem for theories of art. Bosanquet found a solution for it in the "concrete universal" of Hegel. Bosanquet insisted that each work of art has a unique individuality, which is its irreducible "*quale*"; but he also recognized that over against individuality there are rational aesthetic wholes evidencing universality in works of art.<sup>223</sup> For Radhakrishnan however, the problem of reconciling individuality and universality is much easier than it was for Bosanquet, because for him, these are qualities not so much of works of art as of the experiences of the artist.

#### *Art as Vision and Art as Creation*

On closer examination of Radhakrishnan's writings on the subject there seems to be vaguely present in his mind a distinction between art as vision and art as creation. Naturally, the former will be closer to the self, because it is a matter of insight into, and experience of, reality rather than recapturing of it through words, colours or tones. A certain descent from the height and a consequent division between universality and individuality will be inevitable in the latter. Here is a significant statements:

The poetic experience is but momentary for the veil is redrawn and the mood of exaltation passes. The poet attempts a translation of the ineffable experience into words. While poetry is in the soul, the poem is a pale reflection of the original, and an attempt to register in words an impression which has become an image in memory. ... It is difficult to translate states of soul into words and images. The success of art is measured by the extent to which it is able to render experience of one dimension into the terms of another.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>221</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 193.

<sup>222</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*), p. 793.

<sup>223</sup> B. Bosanquet, *The Essentials of Logic*, p. 57.

<sup>224</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 187.

Radhakrishnan criticizes Croce's view of the identity of perception of aesthetic value and expression of it. While he (Croce) admits that perception cannot be separated from expression, "Croce's view does not take into account the fact that inarticulateness stands between experience and expression for the average man."<sup>225</sup>

*The Function of Art and the Value of Art*

The question has to be asked, What is the proper function of art and what is its value? Mark the statement that follows: "The artist's experience is not limited by personal desires or petty cares. His enjoyment of the object is pure and disinterested. We intuit when we behold objects, freed from any context of fear or hope, prospect or regret, usefulness or injury, when we transcend every human bias."<sup>226</sup> Although these words may suggest that Radhakrishnan supports the theory of art for art's sake, it will be found that such is not the case. Art is valuable only for whatever spiritual vision it gives.

On the whole, the main emphasis is on the function of aesthetic experience as a revealer of reality. "A poet is a seer, a revealer of hidden truths."<sup>227</sup> He explicitly takes issue with Croce for denying that art reveals reality. Art does not merely give us subjective impressions; we can say so only if we regard reality as utterly unrelated to knowledge. For Radhakrishnan art is valuable because it is a way of perceiving and expressing reality. "The artist's whole being responds to the object, his feeling is intensified, his imagination stimulated. . . . The object enters into the mind of the artist and unfolds its nature in his imagination. The consciousness of the artist enters into the object, sees, feels and vibrates with its truth."<sup>228</sup> Art thus is akin to other modes of spiritual apprehension. It is a function of integral experience. Radhakrishnan accepts Kant's view that art gives us the form of purposiveness in general "without the representation of any special purpose." "It only gives us a sense of the meaningfulness of life, evokes in us ideas of the larger beauty, justice and charity of the universe."<sup>229</sup> It seems that Radhakrishnan is suggesting

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>226</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 793.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 793. Cf. *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 193.

<sup>228</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 195.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 793.

that all great art, regardless of medium, genre or, species, essentially has only one function to perform, namely, that of imparting truth, and none else. All of its other functions, such as giving pleasure, are purely incidental. "A poet is a seer, a revealer of hidden truths. The images used by him are not intended to please our fancy. They are symbols of the unrevealed."<sup>230</sup>

His delineation of aesthetic intuition makes it indistinguishable from spiritual insight; and this line of thought culminates when he instances "the pith of Amos, the superlative winsomeness of a Gautama and the parables of Jesus" as the highest representations of it. It is therefore very clear that he is not dealing with what we ordinarily understand by aesthetics, because neither Amos nor Gautama nor Jesus is regarded in aesthetic circles as the greatest of artists or as artist at all. In fact, when Radhakrishnan speaks of aesthetic value what he really means is spiritual beauty, more specifically, beauty of the soul.

The purest aesthetic experience is an aspect of the highest reflection of the spirit on our empirical consciousness. Figuratively, it can be called "fusion" or "oneness with" or "absorption into" the spirit. It is really non-different from the highest mystical experience. An artist who eschews religion, moral values or the philosophical and scientific perception of beauty through the intellectual medium, will not be vouchsafed this highest aesthetic experience. It is clear that what Radhakrishnan is primarily concerned with, in his consideration of aesthetic experience, is neither the production of art nor the appreciation of beauty for beauty's sake, but the attainment of the mystical vision and the resultant integration of the self. On these terms it would be perfectly legitimate for him to call the greatest mystic, who contemplates and reflects the beauty of the Divine, the greatest artist. He does not consider the production of art as an essential part of being an artist. Apart from the special quality of beauty under the aspect of aesthetic value, it is identical, as an experience, with the highest type of empirical intuition. It also involves knowledge of the object in exactly the same way as cognitive rational and non-rational intuitions involve. The nature of an artist's experience will depend on the object to which he directs his attention, but will also be determined by the degree of completeness of self-integration that characterizes his effort to

<sup>230</sup> "Reply to Critics," (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) p. 793.

so direct his attention. An artist who is successful in this could say with Keats, "If a sparrow came before my window, I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel." He will exemplify the words that Browning speaks of Shelly: "Not what man sees but what God sees, the Ideas of Plato, seeds of Creation, lying burningly in the Divine Hand—it is towards these he struggles."<sup>231</sup> "There is a deliberate suspension of individuality, an utter submission to the real, a complete absorption in the object as it is, so as to breathe its life and enjoy its form."<sup>232</sup>

In every case art involves knowledge. "Art as the disclosure of the deeper reality of things is a form of knowledge. It is imitation, as Aristotle said, but not of outward nature but of inner reality."<sup>233</sup> Artistic experience is a species of knowledge. It brings with it "peace and reconciliation"<sup>234</sup> It is the vision of the spirit of things. This kind of knowledge is appreciated as a value, not only because it bestows upon us the gifts of peace and reconciliation, but also because it "commends itself by its own sweetness". And "the harmony which an educated sensibility feels in the appreciation of inner reality is also valid knowledge."<sup>235</sup>

Aesthetic experience or artistic knowledge is a special mode of self-realization and of articulation of life, meaning by which empirical life in its totality, suffused with the vibrations of the spirit. It is part and parcel of empirical experience. "It is life come to utterance."<sup>236</sup> And "the work of art is the crystallization of a life-process." Speaking specifically of poetry, Radhakrishnan tells us that it is a form of life, "a realization of the meaning of common life by living it more deeply".<sup>237</sup>

Art must relate us to the mystery of nature and not cut us away from it. In this respect Radhakrishnan is at one with Tagore. He would have none of the distorted representations of the relation between man and the universe which are the fashion of some types of "realism" and of modern "sur-realism" in art. They have all borrowed from the language of science and the machine. "Our contemporary civilization with its specialism and mechanical triumphs knows a large number of facts but not the mystery of the world in which these facts are."<sup>238</sup> The

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>238</sup> *The Spirit in Man in Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 488.

function of art is "to quicken the perception of wonder and surprise, of strangeness and beauty, of the mystery and miraculosity of the world that surrounds us."<sup>239</sup> The function of art as a mode of integral insight is now clear. It is to know and to present the mysterious quality of our common universe. The artist "sees the burden of mystery in all things."<sup>240</sup> "He tries to pluck the mystery out of the thing, and present it to us." And commenting on this himself, he tells us: "This he is able to do, not by means of his reason, but by a riper reason, his intuitive power, which is the nexus, the connecting link, between the appearance and the reality, the flesh and the spirit."<sup>241</sup> The emphasis is on the mysterious nature of the universe, which we have to perceive with other eyes than those of the flesh and of the mind.

It is interesting to note that there is a striking identity of views between Radhakrishnan and Tagore. The burden of Tagore's aesthetics is also that the universe is a "divine mystery".<sup>242</sup> Art means for Tagore "the works that are the expressions of a Universal Spirit",<sup>243</sup> and the perception as well as expression of the mystery of the universe means that we "comprehend by our soul the infinite Spirit which is in the depth of the moving and changing facts of the world".<sup>244</sup>

Such then is the methodological application of integral experience in art. The artist sees the world as spiritual mystery and expresses it as spiritual mystery. In terms of integral experience, aesthetic intuition means "the inevitable fusion of the divine and temporal, the subtle interpenetration of the spirit through the whole man".<sup>245</sup> Only so can we "have the quiet fire that burns, the subtle flash of vision that illuminates the darkness of the earth and the virgin apprehensions that take away the stings from the pains of mortality."<sup>246</sup> Art conceived this way is an actual and veritable transfiguration of the world and of life. True artistic perception requires the same condition as that of "seeing God".<sup>247</sup> When we see a thing or the universe, truly we are seeing God. It requires what Theodor Lipps regards as an

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.<sup>242</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *The Religion of Man*, p. 14.<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.<sup>245</sup> *The Spirit in Man in Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 489.<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

act of *Einfühlung* or "empathy."<sup>248</sup> It is an act which demands the "whole being."<sup>249</sup>

### 3. ETHICS

In ethics or moral life, just as much as in aesthetics, integral experience has its methodological function to perform. Radhakrishnan is not interested in routine, mechanical and formalized rational ethics nor "in conventional good form" but in "creative good life".<sup>250</sup> As in science, philosophy and art it is the genius who intuits the truths, so in ethics the discoverer of the true moral good is the "moral hero".<sup>251</sup> Radhakrishnan depicts the moral hero as the ideal type, who is marked out by his adventurous path, and who is "akin to the discoverer who brings order into the scattered elements of science, or the artist who composes a piece of music or designs a building".<sup>252</sup> Of course, the concept of moral hero is not new in philosophy. Nietzsche, Hartmann and James, in their respective ways, have depicted the "creator", the "champion of ideas", and the "real individual" with "brain born" ideas as the ideal type of moral excellence. That is also true of Carlyle. All advances in moral life are due to non-conformists.<sup>253</sup> The moral hero is one who is on the march to fulfil his spiritual destiny; he "follows an inner rhythm which goads him on and he has the satisfaction of obeying his destiny, fulfilling his self".<sup>254</sup> Among such heroes are not only the sages of India and Greece, the prophets of Israel and the saints of Christendom but also many obscure men.<sup>255</sup>

Radhakrishnan evidently is not an advocate of conventional morality. Real morality consists of "skill and adventure".<sup>256</sup> Moral heroism is played on the chess-board of life. Only the moral hero can "grasp the position with a sure insight", and when he has so grasped it "he moves forward". Socrates' refusal to escape

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>252</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 196.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>255</sup> *The Spirit in Man (Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 490.

<sup>256</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 197.

from prison and Jesus' behaviour before Pilate are some of the examples of moral heroism, and these are markedly different from prudential morality.<sup>257</sup> The combinations of life's possibilities are numerous and unpredictable, but the moral hero has a "sense of the right", and by means of integral insight he is able to resolve the right and wrong of any given situation where ordinary men would fail. Right and wrong are for him not just matters of opinion or of probability considerations; they are sure and certain knowledge, which he possesses. Therefore, the best that lesser men are able to do is to imitate the moral hero; that will also be an education of conscience for them.<sup>258</sup> And, ethical certainty requires a highest end from which all others are derived, an end which flows from the very self which also gives meaning and significance to the less general ethical ends.<sup>259</sup> The moral hero automatically and by the very nature of his being knows the path of duty clearly. This certainty is not quite like the Categorical Imperative, because every man does not naturally know what he "ought" to do; rather it takes a kind of moral superman, who paradoxically enough has also had the benefit of a rigorously educated and disciplined conscience, to gain automatically the knowledge of his duty.

On the surface, there is some similarity between Radhakrishnan's intuitive ethics and that of Richard Price, one of the earliest champions of this theory, who extended Locke's notion of intuition to ethics. He spoke of an "immediate perception of morality without any deductions of reasoning".<sup>260</sup> But there are differences. (1) For Price, moral intuition was an intellectual act containing its own evidence.<sup>261</sup> Note that for him it is an *intellectual act*, while for Radhakrishnan it is an act of integral insight, in which the whole personality dominated and controlled by mystical perception is involved. (2) Secondly, it is, for Price, a simple act which is within the power of man in his natural state to exercise, while, for Radhakrishnan, it is an integral act which requires a man of supernatural vision and perfect self-integration.

<sup>257</sup> *The Spirit in Man (Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 490.

<sup>258</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 142.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>260</sup> J. L. Stocks, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Radhakrishnan applies the method of integral insight to decide the questions of good and right. It is very revealing to note that in Radhakrishnan "rightness", "oughtness", "the good", all apply not merely to general ethical judgments but also to concrete courses of duty. Radhakrishnan should essentially differ from both Kant and G. E. Moore in this respect. Kant, as Sverre Klausen points out,<sup>263</sup> considers the "existence" of the moral law different from empirical existence.<sup>263</sup> G. E. Moore agrees with Kant in so far as he recognizes the non-natural characteristic of the predicate "good". "The predicate cannot be identified with anything actual but rather with a non-actual *Seinsollendes*."<sup>264</sup> Now if it is non-actual it can certainly not be said to be capable of influencing the will, and the will is the source of concrete decision and action. With regard to Kant, it is still a subject of debate as to whether he had intended the moral law or the Categorical Imperative to be applied to the natural state of the will, or whether its purpose is something other than the regulation of empirical choice and action. But with Radhakrishnan there is no such problem. He is not concerned with the natural will of man but with the will of the man whose whole being is suffused with the Spirit, so that there is nothing "natural" left in it. When Radhakrishnan's moral hero says "I will", it is the utterance of the will of the universal Spirit. Radhakrishnan is exclusively concerned in ethics with the moral hero, and those who have not raised themselves to the corresponding level do not seem to have any message from him, except that they must also strive by means of integral experience to reach there—and, of course, those who have reached that level do not need that message. But unless one emphasizes the infallible power of the moral superman to decide what is good and right in each situation of ethical choice one will have to leave Radhakrishnan and confess with Karl Jaspers, "Even in the certainty of my (moral) decisions, insofar as it is manifest in the world, there must remain a floating (i.e. an uncertainty)".<sup>265</sup>

<sup>263</sup> Sverre Klausen, *Kants Kritik und Ihre Kritiker* quoted by Nathaniel Lawrence (Kant and Modern Philosophy) in *The Review of Metaphysics*, March, 1957 (Vol. X, No. 3) p. 443.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>266</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, p. 72.



Jaspers is obviously influenced by both Kant and Existentialism. Even G. E. Moore would not have too much difficulty in agreeing with Jaspers in his doubting, but existential, certainty, which proclaims that though "man should choose himself according to his conscience, which is the voice of God", however always "my choice remains a risk".<sup>266</sup> For Radhakrishnan the certainty of moral choice is not a certainty that involves any such risk; it is not an existential affirmation of faith, that concedes the possibility of going wrong; on the contrary it is a certainty born of a clear vision of the universal Spirit. It is based on indubitable knowledge, with no touch of the problematic about it.

Radhakrishnan's application of integral experience to the problem of ethics seems to be the result of combining the ethics of Kant, Nietzsche, Jesus, Tolstoy and of the average mystic. The idea of intuition by means of which one knows (either empirically or transcendently) the absolute moral law is Kantian. Nietzsche is visible in the notion of the superman. But in our context it is not exactly Nietzsche's superman who is beyond good and evil, but a different one who appears in the image of Jesus, who is wholly good and whose goodness, though transcendent is still a fulfilment and completion of natural goodness. Accordingly, the ethical precepts of the Gospel of Jesus are commended.<sup>267</sup> A quotation, obviously from Augustine, "Love and do what you like" is cited. "Love", he tells us, "takes us to the deeper secrets of life and gives us a more integrated view than intellectual subtlety and a few plain moral rules can do."<sup>268</sup> The man who is filled with love can make no wrong decision. Here we hear the voice of Tolstoy. Much of what our philosopher says is commonplace, but he tries to give them a philosophical meaning. A superlative definiteness of moral truths in each particular situation, which are intuited integrally, is what is characteristic of, and original with, the method of Radhakrishnan.

Strictly speaking, Radhakrishnan's ethical theory is no ethical theory in the formal sense. His application of integral

<sup>266</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Der Philosophische Glaube*, p. 58 quoted by F. H. Hoinemann, in *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, p. 65.

<sup>267</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 197.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

experience to the problem of moral judgment is designed to make moral heroes out of all men. He only tells us how the perfected behave. The realm of common morality for the natural man does not receive any positive attention from him. He develops no criteria for making ordinary judgments of good and bad, and right and wrong. As for the moral hero, he makes decisions as he intuits the truth, in the unique context of every life-situation. There is reason to argue that his moral hero is not just an ethical man, but one who is guided by integral experience. Integral experience in truth is beyond all moral categories,—beyond good and evil, not in the Nietzschean sense, but in the sense of being transcendently good. So the moral hero is himself beyond good and evil, though not beneath it. For the moral hero, who has attained wisdom, morality does not exist any more by way of duty. Duty exists only for one who has not yet attained the integral state, who is still to be guided by conscience. And “conscience itself is the sign of a divided life.”<sup>269</sup> For the moral superman “duty as such drops away” though “not all activity.”<sup>270</sup> But “the activity of the liberated is free and spontaneous and not obligatory.”<sup>271</sup> Such a man acts “for the sake of the welfare of the world”<sup>272</sup> even though he has “attained wisdom.”<sup>273</sup> In his case, work is not practised as a *sādhana* (spiritual discipline) but becomes a *lakṣaṇa* (self-expression or sign).<sup>274</sup>

But the common man, the not-yet-liberated, is comprehended by moral obligation. Radhakrishnan speaks of *sādhāraṇadharma*,<sup>275</sup> common virtues obligatory on all, such as the practice of kindness. He does not elaborate the doctrine of *sādhāraṇadharma*, but from his statements it is to be assumed that it is also enveloped by a system of idealistic ethical precepts, which are qualitatively no different from the high principles of integral ethics. But the only conceivable point of difference is that *sādhāraṇadharma* is practised as a *sādhana*,<sup>276</sup> by those who are on this side of attainment, while integral ethics is practised by the perfected as a spontaneous expression (*lakṣaṇa*)<sup>277</sup> of their being. But even for the common man the heroic element is indispensable from his code of conduct. Thus in the last resort the distinction

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*, p. 273.<sup>270</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 73.<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.<sup>272</sup> This idea is expressed by the doctrine of *Lokasangraha*.<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.<sup>276</sup> Meaning method of attainment.<sup>277</sup> Meaning natural sign.

between the two types of ethics is not that they embody two different sets of principles but that they are practised by people in two different levels of perfection, and for two different reasons.

For the perfected, the ethics of moral heroism is spontaneous. So when we talk about their moral behaviour in terms of integral experience we are being merely descriptive, that is to say, of actual behaviour. For the non-perfected, integral experience seems to have a normative function in ethics. But the norm is merely the vision of the perfected. However, a contradiction arises when the non-perfected are asked to behave like the perfected.

The main problem is this: the integral method in ethics may, for argument's sake, be conceded to be valid for men who have attained the heights; but if lesser men are required to adopt the same method, then it would be necessary for us to presuppose that they are able to intuit what is right and what is good in each given situation in their unredeemed state—a possibility which Radhakrishnan has not allowed. All that they can do is to apply the general idealistic moral code in every situation. This is purely mechanical, and does not require either any unique intuition or integral insight.

The next problem is, who is qualified to intuit the absolutely good and right things, seeing that, according to Radhakrishnan's own admission, even the greatest of the saints and sages have sometimes faltered? Though theoretically he contends that the moral judgments of these superior men cannot be scrutinized at the bar of other people's opinions, yet he himself does subject a few of the particular judgments of the most outstanding of those whom he includes in this class. For did not even Jesus waver in the Garden of Gethsamane?<sup>278</sup> There were moments when the behaviour of one so morally exalted as Jesus deviated from his precepts. Radhakrishnan observes:

No man on earth has ever maintained spiritual poise all through his life. The Jesus who declared that men must not resist evil if they are to become the sons of the Father who makes his sun to shine upon good men and bad, and his rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, was the same Jesus who cursed the fig-tree and drove the tradesmen from the temple.<sup>279</sup>

<sup>278</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 114.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 113-114.

Radhakrishnan cites these and other instances to show that perfect intuitions of moral good do not necessarily abide always even with the great men of the Spirit.

### *Some Issues*

In the context of the foregoing discussion of Radhakrishnan's ethics certain issues seem to be unavoidable. The first one is regarding the criteria of moral decision. There must be a standard by which we can decide that this particular moral judgment is in accordance with integral insight but that one is not. Radhakrishnan does assume that there are some such explicit or implicit criteria accessible to critical intelligence and subject to objective apprehension, whereby we can judge, as he himself has judged, whether those sages and saints have erred in the particular moral acts of theirs which he adduces as instances of error and failure. Of course he could advance a reply by pointing to the contradiction or inconsistency between their preaching that "men must not resist evil" and their cursing fig-trees, and their driving out tradesmen from the temple. The contradiction is, however, not obvious. We can recognize its existence only if we so interpret the command "you must not resist evil" as to include by implication such injunctions as "you must not curse fig-trees" and "you must not drive out tradesmen from the temple". Thus the argument of contradiction or inconsistency can scarcely be invoked. If so, what are the criteria? This leads us to the second issue.

The second issue concerns the implicit use of certain species of idealistic ethics as the criteria for moral decision. It seems that the standard of ethical judgments that Radhakrishnan points to—and he does point to one, even though only implicitly—is not the indubitable and unquestionable, unique moral intuitions gained through some special power exercised by men of superior spiritual endowments, but just a particular species of moral idealism, which can be unequivocally expressed in terms of certain counsels of perfection and injunctions that are regarded as universally binding. From this arises the third issue.

The third one pertains to the superfluity of intuitions in idealistic ethics. If certain definite principles of idealistic ethics are assumed, it is hardly necessary and indeed not meaningful to apply any intuitions at all in moral judgments, because one

could, by virtue of a simple adherence to the relevant set of idealistic propositions, be as certain as Tolstoy was, without ever needing even to reason, much less to intuit, as to what is that code of conduct which is right, perfect and noble at all times, in all places and under all circumstances. No more than a simple obedience to the known precepts would be required. Even if it is argued that integral experience merely completes and confirms by way of practical verification the counsels of perfection as well as the injunctions of idealistic ethics, we cannot escape the conclusion that integral experience carries no special import, because it is idealistic ethics that matters. If we are already told what we are supposed to intuit then, the infinitive term "to intuit" is not quite properly used. At least the meaning of the term "intuition" will have to be so altered as to mean "spontaneous acquiescence." For, what the unperfected have to do by an act of will, undertaken in faith, the perfected can do spontaneously, without effort, perhaps also with an automatic knowledge of the goodness of what they do. But to use "intuition" or "integral insight" to describe action of this quality will be stretching its meaning too far.

#### *Summing up*

From what Radhakrishnan has got to say on the subject of ethics, it seems fairly clear that there are only two courses open to him. Either (a) he must relax the rigour of his ethical idealism or (b) he must insist less on the power of intuition. If he follows the second course then he will be forced to do one of the two things: either (i) reducing ethics to a matter of faith—at least as far as the unperfected are concerned, or (ii) submitting ethics to a deductive and inductive method, as is the practice in Western philosophy generally.<sup>280</sup> Radhakrishnan indicates this second possibility at times, but it by no means represents his viewpoint on the subject. In the case of (i) he can possibly claim to have an ethic of perfection, a species of dogmatics. In the case of (ii) he can have an ethical theory proper, albeit idealistic.

But if he follows course (a), that is to say, if he relaxes the rigour of his idealism in ethical doctrine, and puts more reliance on intuition as such, he can convert ethics into a matter of unique intuitions. In that case his criticism of the particular activities

<sup>280</sup> E. A. Burtt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 387.

of the moral supermen could be justified on the ground that he is using his own unique individual intuitions to pass judgment on other people's unique individual intuitions. (This, however, does not seem to be the case with Radhakrishnan.) If that were the case, ethics could become a system of moral intuitions, progressively integrated with one another till they become an organic whole, which in turn, at each stage and at the end, becomes organically related to intuitions in other realms of value, such as those of science and art as he conceives them, as also to his method of knowledge as a whole. The considerations in relating them one with another should be no other than those of coherence and fitness in an organic system of internally related moral intuitions. Such systems, as systems, may perhaps be expressed by the terms "love", "non-violence", "dharma", although that would require us to vastly change the established meanings of these terms. But the possibility may be allowed. Radhakrishnan could pursue this line without detriment to the method of integral experience which he also wishes to apply in ethics. But even here it is impossible to maintain that any one's ethical judgments may find universal validation, though Radhakrishnan thinks that the man of "ethical sensitivity cannot err," because to him "the path of duty is as clear as any knowledge we possess". But we should probably take this as a conditional statement and not as a categorical one. It would amount, then, to saying, provided there is perfect ethical sensitivity there could be certain knowledge of right and wrong. But Radhakrishnan himself has not been able to find for us such a perfectly ethically sensitive individual. In a situation in which the condition has not been empirically verified to exist even in one concrete instance the consequent cannot have absolute meaning. So even if we grant that there is a possibility of developing ethics along the lines of integral experience—which as it is is no more than a theoretical admission—the authority and self-certainty of moral intuitions, like those of other intuitions, can only be relative.

### 3. Conclusion

#### I

#### SELF-EVIDENCE OF THE SUBJECT AND INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE: THEIR EQUATION AND THE PROBLEMS PERTAINING TO IT

We have so far been engaged in analysing the method by which Radhakrishnan tries to establish integral experience as the way to gain self-evident knowledge of ultimate reality. All the various forms of intuition, the sensuous, the rational and the supersensuous have been swept into a single focus, which is designated by the term "integral experience".

Integral experience is advanced as a new and original version of the perennial philosophy, and as such it is visualized as an adequate and energetic answer to the sceptical philosophies that deny to man the power to know reality. Kant, who shaped scepticism into a powerful system, was not unaware of the role of intuition in knowledge. But he largely confined it to sense-perception, now and then conceding it grudgingly, although very suggestively, to reason. In any case he altogether ruled out supersensuous intuitions that may be adequate to the knowledge of the Unconditioned. Radhakrishnan would argue that not only are there supersensuous intuitions but the sensuous and the rational themselves are in essence supersensuous. Nothing can be truly regarded as intuition unless there is an element of mystical immediacy in it.

Radhakrishnan uses "integral experience" as the equivalent of the Sanskrit term "anubhava". Here he is only following an established practice. *Anubhava* is regarded as carrying the same meaning as *jnāna*. *Anubhava* or *jnāna* refers to "absolute knowledge which is at the same time knowledge of the real."<sup>1</sup> "Integral experience" is also used in the special sense of what are called *samyag-jnāna* and *samyag-darśana*, both of which mean the same

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 511.

thing, namely, the consummatory knowledge which brings release or *mokṣa*.<sup>2</sup> Radhakrishnan, however, has made a distinction—obviously ad hoc and not according to any consistent design—between *samyag-darśana* and *samyag-jñāna* as follows: “While *samyag-jñāna* insists on the reflective preparation necessary for it (perfect intuition), *samyag-darśana* points to the immediacy of intuition, where the ultimate reality is the object of direct apprehension (*īkṣāṇa*) as well as meditation (*dhyāna*).<sup>3</sup> The difference between them is admittedly only a matter of emphasis; otherwise they mean the same thing. In any case Radhakrishnan feels that “anubhava” is the fittest term to convey the meaning he has in mind.<sup>4</sup>

Now, if integral experience is self-evidence, it is that in the sense of self-evident knowledge. The theory of integral experience is epistemology, to be sure, but, as in the whole of Indian tradition in philosophy, there is no epistemology that is independent of metaphysics, for the two are always indistinguishably intertwined. Knowledge is the middle term connecting two metaphysical concepts at both ends, namely, the knower and the known. The whole burden of vedantic thinking is that knowledge, the knower and the known are all one,<sup>5</sup> and Radhakrishnan as a true vedantist accepts this. What he undertakes is only a new way of elaborating this identity. At the same time, his theory implies certain significant departures from the orthodox elaboration of the principle of identity of the three. By the same token it implies notable differences from the manner in which the nature of self-evidence is presented in classical writings, especially of the school of Śāṅkara, and in the writings of contemporary orthodox advaitins. There is no doubt that Radhakrishnan treats integral experience as an ontological theory as well as an epistemological one, for as he says, integral experience “is not only a mode of knowing but also a mode of being”.<sup>6</sup> “Being” is to be taken in the sense of both the knower and the known. Knower and the known are the self and reality respectively.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

<sup>5</sup> *Jñāna-jñeya-jatirbhédarहितam pāramārthatattvadarśanam* (perception of ultimate reality without the distinction of knowledge, the known and the knower)

—Śāṅkara *Bhāṣya* on *Māṇḍūkya Kārika*.

<sup>6</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 138.



Integral experience thus is seen to involve theories of all the three, namely the self, knowledge and reality. In the preceding chapter integral experience was dealt with with reference to all of them. Every discussion of epistemology by the various schools of Indian Philosophy has been known to refer to the self and reality, directly or indirectly, even if, as in the case of some heterodox schools, the conclusion with regard to these may be negative. We must now try to see some of the problems arising from the application of the principle of integrality to these three concepts, and this we shall try to do by way of comparison with the stricter advaitist position.

This whole problem has reference to the question of transcendence and immanence. In the previous chapter we spoke of three areas in which transcendence and immanence are applicable: mystical intuition transcending the totality of man's powers, "the Beyond" transcending Nature and "the Other" transcending the self. We discussed the ways in which Radhakrishnan attempts to bring the transcendent and the immanent within the framework of the integral in all the three cases. The integral is visualized as a way of transcending the duality of transcendence and immanence. It is true of the classical Advaita also that it conceives of the self, knowledge and reality as transcendent over the dualities of transcendence and immanence. But it does it in a different way from Radhakrishnan. Advaitins have the rigorous concepts of the unitary self, unitary consciousness or knowledge and unitary reality, while Radhakrishnan has the concepts of the integral self, knowledge and reality. Radhakrishnan, it appears, at heart really feels that in the orthodox expositions of this transcendence over transcendence and immanence, there is a bias towards transcendence, while he would like to remedy this position by what he calls a conception of "immanent transcendence". Orthodox writers would object—in fact they do—that Radhakrishnan is altogether an immanentist. Radhakrishnan reposes self-evidence on the integral, while the orthodox writers on the unitary. We must now proceed to examine the position in detail and confront the problems that will be raised.

#### INTEGRAL SELF, INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE, INTEGRAL REALITY

The differences among the various sub-schools of advaitism is only one of how to approach the problems of the unity of the

self, the unity of knowledge and the unity of reality. Radhakrishnan's integral experience can also be taken as one of these ways of approach, which enjoys a certain popularity among a large section of modern students of philosophy. But it is so distinct from the theories of all historically established schools that it is hard to refer to it as advaitic in the strict sense. We shall also notice many similarities between Radhakrishnan's reconstruction of the self, knowledge and reality and that of some German thinkers among the post-Kantians, particularly the poet J. G. Herder and also the later romanticists, although the latter, insofar as they have moved away from the Kantian epistemological structure much too far, resemble Radhakrishnan less than does Herder, who is closer, though in opposition, to it. A quotation that presents in summary Herder's views on the above matters will be helpful in giving us an idea as to the resemblance we are talking about, although occasions will arise later on for us to bring out particular points of this resemblance more fully.

The poet J. G. Herder opposes the Kantian dualism of mental faculties and emphasizes the unity of soul-life; thought and will, understanding and sensation spring from a common ground. All of these factors cooperate in knowledge. ... He holds that rationalism with its conceptual method cannot do justice to living reality, and he accordingly interprets nature and mind organically and historically. In the spirit of pantheism he asserts that God reveals himself in nature and in man, particularly in the religion, art, and life of the peoples. The history of mankind is a process of evolution towards the ideal of humanity, that is, the harmonious development of all human capacities in relation to the environment. Our rational capacity should be educated and developed into a developed reason, our refined senses into art, our impulses into genuine freedom and beauty, our motives into love of humanity.<sup>7</sup>

*The Integral as the Interpretation of the Unitary*

According to the classical advaitic position, regardless of all the differences among sub-schools, the self is an unitary self, consciousness is a unitary consciousness and reality is a unitary reality. Also, it is one and the same thing that is designated

<sup>7</sup> F. Thilly and L. Wood, *Op. Cit.*, p. 447.

variantly as self, consciousness (knowledge) or reality. Each of these designations is employed according to the particular perspective from which it is viewed at any given time.

Radhakrishnan changes the unitary into the integral, with integral experience as a comprehensive structure. The history of the term "integral experience" cannot be altogether without relevance to the theory advanced by Radhakrishnan. Terminologically, it is a borrowing from Bergson. Bergson regards his method of knowledge as integral experience, which unlike the synthetic method followed by science is not a "generalization of experience" being "absolutely non-discursive and non-thinking". Bergson holds that "like the Plotinian intuition of the One, it dissolves discourse into its dynamic origins and transmutes thought into transcendental feeling".<sup>8</sup> Radhakrishnan's originality lies in the fact that he enriches integral experience, apart from the contents of "transcendental feeling", with those of transcendental reason and mystical intuition. But the notion of a synthesis, albeit non-symbolic and supra-intellectual, persists in the integral experience of Radhakrishnan. On the contrary, the unitary consciousness of the Advaita does not allow the notion of any kind of synthesis.

Accordingly, Radhakrishnan introduces into the original vedantic concepts several novel elements. Certain serious transformations take place in the former. The integral is not, however, conceived as antithetical to the unitary, of which it is regarded as an interpretation. The integral is so to say the meaning of the unitary; the two are identical, for Radhakrishnan. However, Radhakrishnan feels that the purely unitary can be totally negative. As Professor Raju points out,<sup>9</sup> at one time in Radhakrishnan's career, when he wrote the *Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*—he was dissatisfied with Śāṅkara, the great exponent of the Nirguṇa Brahman, "for over-emphasizing the negative element in the Absolute and for ignoring the positive". The unitary is that which is described in purely negative terms, for it is feared that concession to any positive attribute would imply duality in Brahman, which is impermissible. Later on, particularly in his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Radhakrishnan saw more clearly the point of the unitary, which is

<sup>8</sup> Horace M. Kallen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 522.

described negatively. He recognized it as the ideal inherent in, and hence the inalienable criterion of, all philosophical and religious approach to the problem of reality. This recognition has been central to his thinking ever since. However, he is sure that an uninterpreted ideal of unitary reality, self or knowledge can avail nothing, as the problem is to attain reality and not merely to argue about it. The path to attainment will require that we start from where we actually are, that we carry the facts of life, the organizations, the values, the concerns, the experiences, with us; it is no use setting about to shed them all and trying to catch hold of reality at some remote end. All this concerns the practical, practical not merely in the sense of having a goal of some actual, ultimate gain, but in the sense of being geared to methods of endeavour. Radhakrishnan feels the great need of re-interpreting the ideal of Vedanta.

### *The Transcendent and the Human*

We observed in the Introduction that Radhakrishnan is Philosopher of Religion, Comparative Philosopher and Historian of Indian Philosophy. Now, it has been clear that Integral Experience relates above all to Philosophy of Religion; yet it is not without bearing on the History of Indian Philosophy and Comparative Philosophy, for wherever re-interpretation and progressive construction are involved these two come in. As the chief interest in the construction of the theory of integral experience vis-a-vis the advaita vedantic tradition is to show the identity of the integral with the unitary, re-interpretation and enrichment of the old philosophy with particular emphasis on this point is undertaken.

Progress is actually rebirth of the past; this means regeneration. It involves the re-interpretation of the past of Indian Philosophy in the light of Western Philosophy. Thus the study of the history of Indian Philosophy and Comparative Philosophy go hand in hand.

Now, although it is true that "there is hardly any height of spiritual insight or rational philosophy attained in the world that has not its parallel in the vast stretch that lies between the early vedic seers and the modern Naiyayikas",<sup>10</sup> the rediscovery of some of the relevant elements has needed the inspiration of

<sup>10</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 8.

Western Philosophy. Indeed this is one of the main insights developed in *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. In fact Radhakrishnan is aware of the need of what Professor Raju calls "humanism" "which will be true to man by recognizing every factor of man's being, including the spiritual."<sup>11</sup> In a relevant and adequate philosophy there is a need to start from the human end as well as from the end of the Absolute or Brahman. We may quote Professor Raju and do so approvingly.

As a matter of fact, the acceptance of the Kantian approach by many Indian academic philosophers, following on the trail of Radhakrishnan, has already caused the starting point to shift from Brahman to the *human* individual. The alleged dialogue between Socrates and the Indian Philosopher suggests that Western Philosophy begins its arguments with man, whereas the Indian begins with God... Radhakrishnan refers appreciatively to Socrates' assertion that the noblest of all investigations is the study of man and of what man should be and pursue.<sup>12</sup>

The study of man requires the study of biology, psychology, sociology and history. Although biology and psychology are not unknown in Indian philosophy, Radhakrishnan is notable among Indian Philosophers for admitting that the structures of society and history are relevant to Reality. "History is neither a chapter of accidents, nor a determined drift. It is a pattern of absolute significance."<sup>13</sup> Life, mind, society and history are aspects of Reality. Integral experience is related to all these aspects. As a philosopher his interest is not to study any of them independently or for its own sake, but to study them strictly for the sake of determining the conditions that make the knowledge of the Unconditioned Reality possible. The method is "somewhat similar to Kant's proof of a priori elements",<sup>14</sup> which "belong to the very structure of our mind".<sup>15</sup> Obviously, that is not the way a psychologist would study the human "mind". This distinction applies to all the other fields mentioned. Philosophers

<sup>11</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 525.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 525.

<sup>13</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" in *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 156.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

themselves, who are given over to "a self-sufficient humanism", suffer from the lack of integrating principles and criteria whereby to deduce meanings out of these structures. The recognition of the need of such principles and criteria is the distinguishing feature of the Critical philosophy. Radhakrishnan is clearly a follower of the critical method. But he goes one step further by offering an ultimate ideal for the integration and the deduction of meanings. That ideal is the unitary self, reality or consciousness. That is where he considers the Advaita as the ultimate standard of all truth. Yet it should not be the imposition of a transcendent ideal; it has also got to be the development of immanent truth out of the various structures of human existence by the critical method. It is in this sense that Professor Raju ascribes to Radhakrishnan a *critical humanism*,<sup>16</sup> and he is right. Radhakrishnan himself calls this humanism *true humanism*.

In "Fragments of a Confession", he criticizes the inadequacy of the scientific approach to the problems of Biology, Psychology, Sociology, History, etc. and then writes constructively under the heading "Samsara or the World of Change", as follows:

Whereas the scientific mind is satisfied with secondary causes, the philosophic mind demands final causes. Philosophy is an attempt to explain the world to which we belong. It is experience come to an understanding with itself. Experience relates to the world of objects, of things, of nature studied by the natural sciences; the world of individual subjects, their thoughts and feelings, their desires and decisions, studied by the social sciences, like psychology and history; the world of values studied by literature, philosophy and religion. We must weave into a consistent pattern the different sides of our experience.... We must endeavour to frame a coherent system of general ideas in terms of which the different types of experience can be interpreted.<sup>17</sup>

*The Transcendent in Relation to the Empirical, Historical and Social*

Radhakrishnan is as insistent on the immanent patterns of meanings pointing towards the transcendent in the materials of life as on the transcendent ideal itself. There has to be a real

<sup>16</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 521.

<sup>17</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) pp. 26-27.

unity between them. The problem of how we get to know the transcendent ideal is of paramount importance. Classical Advaita begins with *Śruti* or the Vedas, through which the ultimate truth is communicated. This is what is known as *śabda-pramāṇa*. Knowledge begins with the Vedas or *Śruti* and then it is confirmed by reasoning and finally culminates in unitary experience or vision (*anubhava* or *samyag-darśana*).<sup>18</sup> That is the order of knowledge events in orthodox vedānta. "The Scripture must be admitted to be the means of knowing Brahman."<sup>19</sup> "The knowledge of Brahman is the result of reflection on the meaning of scriptural texts regarding it. It cannot be derived from inference and other means of knowledge."<sup>20</sup> It is said of Śaṅkara that he does not abjure reason, but only subordinates it to scripture. Śaṅkara's position is this: "Mere reasoning ungrounded in faith in the scripture cannot lead to the realization of the Atman. Reasoning in conformity with the scripture is conducive to the intuition of Brahman, and therefore should be employed."<sup>21</sup> Here "scripture" stands for the Vedas, that specific body of revealed knowledge, and not for the religious books of mankind in general, much less for some generic idea of revelation. The function that reason or *tarka* has to perform is a negative one, that is, to clear the crust of delusion off our understanding so that the light of the scripture may shine upon it unobstructed. There is no kinship whatsoever between the structure of reason and the truth that the revelation of the scripture sheds. For Radhakrishnan it is all very different. Reason itself is positive. Reason and the other faculties of man contain the elements of truth. Reason and feeling, if cleansed of the discursive and sensuous elements, reveal their essential structures, which are intuitive and oriented towards the ultimate truth. They confirm the truth of the scripture by verifying it with their own essential nature. Accordingly, for Radhakrishnan the scriptures are more than the Vedas; they include all the scriptures of mankind, although he would still regard the Vedas as the model scripture. Furthermore "scripture" stands for a generic idea of revelation.

<sup>18</sup> J. Sinha, *Op. Cit.*, p. 553.

<sup>19</sup> *Śāstrapramāṇam brahma abhyupagantavyam*.—Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra*, i. 1.4.

<sup>20</sup> *Vedasya hi nirapeksam svārthe prāmāṇyam*.—*Ibid.*, ii, 1.1.

<sup>21</sup> *Śrutyānugṛhīta eva hi atra anubhāvangaṭvāna āśrīyate*, *Ibid.*, ii. 1.6.

The Veda, the wisdom, is the accepted name for the highest spiritual truth of which the human mind is capable. It is the work of the ṛṣis or seers. The truths of the ṛṣis are not evolved as the result of logical reasoning or systematic philosophy but they are the products of spiritual intuition, dṛṣṭi or vision. The ṛṣis are not so much the authors of the truth recorded in the Vedas as the seers who were able to discern the eternal truths by raising their life-spirit to the plane of the universal spirit. They are the pioneer researchers in the realm of spirit who saw more in the world than their fellows. Their utterances are based not on transitory vision but on the continuous experience of resident life and power. When the Vedas are regarded as the highest authority, all that is meant is that the most exacting of all authorities is the authority of facts.<sup>22</sup>

The mediation of the transcendent truth does take place through a means that is inseparable from the training of the human faculties of the seers. And if man in general is to come to an awareness of that truth there has to be the critical approach to his powers and consequent detection of their true being. Thus we can and have got to start from where we are. There will be no need for a shift from reason to faith in a particular scripture, which Radhakrishnan recognizes to be an impossible condition to demand, besides doing serious violence to the meaning of philosophy as a universal enterprise. We start from reason and from our experiences, including the social, the artistic, etc. not excluding the religious. Besides, any shift in the starting point will bring about change in the conception of the end as well. The method followed by Radhakrishnan is such that the end result of the process of realization will comprehend the whole process, as the end is immanent in the process itself. In classical Advaita it is entirely different. The process itself will be of no value; in fact it must disappear altogether when the end is realized.

What is true of the process of realization or experience is also true of being, because being is the ground of experience. Radhakrishnan is at one with all those idealists who believe that the structure of experience and the structure of reality are identical. Discussing Whitehead's idea of reality as process and

<sup>22</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 89-90.



underlining his agreement with it, Radhakrishnan observes as follows so as to emphasize that just as the unitary is in the background of all our experience, so the transcendent, unitary Brahman is in the background of all cosmic processes, particularly history:

If there is the emergence of what is genuinely new in the cosmic process then the cosmic series is not self-explanatory. Our search for the reality of the world, for the structure of the cosmos, reveals the presence of something invisible and eternal which is working within the visible and the temporal world.... It does not contain its origin or meaning within itself. It is not self-explanatory. The meaning of the mystery, the origin and the end of the world cannot be scientifically apprehended. They require to be investigated metaphysically.<sup>23</sup>

Reality can be truly perceived only when it is perceived from the process end as well as from the transcendent end. That only integral experience makes possible. For this reason Radhakrishnan is in debt to both the Advaita and to organismic philosophers among the idealists, Whitehead as well as some of the German thinkers. On the organismic side of his thought, as has been observed, he shows great affinities with Herder.

### 1. THE SELF

In Radhakrishnan there are two lines of thought on the subject of self. They are, meant to be complementary. They are, (a) Self as an organized whole; (b) Self as subject.

#### *Self as an Organized Whole*

According to the first line of thought, "human self is an emergent aspect of the world process and not a substance different in kind from the process itself".<sup>24</sup> It is argued, in terms of the organismic philosophy, which, as we have remarked in the *Introduction*, is one of the inspirations of Radhakrishnan:

Persistence of pattern constitutes unity of a thing or a self. Though every one of the constituents of the body is changing,

<sup>23</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*), pp. 37-38.

<sup>24</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 266.

the bodily system as an organized totality endures. It is the same with regard to the human self which is a unity of diverse parts with an enduring structure. Transient as many of its elements are, the plan of organization, however, is preserved.<sup>25</sup>

Prof. D. M. Datta observes rightly:

The human self is conceived, by Radhakrishnan, neither as simple nor as a *substance*. Like matter, life and other expressions of the spirit, it is an organized whole. It is the latest and the highest product of emergent evolution. As such it is much more integrated and organized than matter, life and the animal mind. While integration is automatic or instinctive in the sub-human world, it is at least partly conscious and voluntary in man. Through intelligence man can knit together the different aspects and moments of his life. He can conceive some ideals and organize all the activities of his life for the attainment of these values. The more he unifies his life in pursuit of ideals, the more organized, integrated and perfect does his life become.<sup>26</sup>

Reality, says Radhakrishnan, is everywhere complex. It is so even in the atom. The self as real need not be simple.<sup>27</sup> But it is, however, wrong to confuse the self with a series of mental states.<sup>28</sup> But he supports the alleged stand of the Buddha who "opposed the two extreme views that the self is an unchanging essence and that it is absolutely different each moment".<sup>29</sup> The Buddha, it is contended, "held to the middle position that the self arises through the past as its cause".<sup>30</sup> The self is not a collection of mental states but is characterized by organization. It is an organization which is active as a whole".<sup>31</sup> As beings rise in the scale of evolution they represent a higher degree of organization. Thus the lower animals do not have the organization characteristic of the human self. The rational synthetic unity

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 266.

<sup>26</sup> D. M. Datta, *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 154.

<sup>27</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167.

of the human being is of a much higher order than the instinctive unity of the animal.<sup>32</sup> But man carries with him and in himself the unique qualities of all levels of existence below his own, which he has passed through. In the words of Plato three types of functions are to be found in the self of man, namely, appetites and desires, emotional reactions, and intellectual ideals. In man all of these are found, but what is really distinctive of man is the last, which organize experience into more or less permanent unities.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, "each of us tries to control his life by a main life-purpose to which all others are subordinated."<sup>34</sup> "This choice limits the direction and scope of the development of the self".<sup>35</sup> Radhakrishnan conceives the self as a teleological unity, which is the only thing constant in the concrete, busy, active, dynamic self.<sup>36</sup> "In all transformations, certain persistent and distinguishable characters remain."<sup>37</sup> Sometimes Radhakrishnan even compares the unity of the self to the unity of a symphony, which is also in fact a teleological unity. "As the unity of a single melody is realized in the passage of time, the unity of self is realized in the series of stages, towards the attainment of ends."<sup>38</sup>

The organization varies from individual to individual. Each human self is unique and inexchangeable with another. The self-identity of a person depends on certain determinable characteristics which are seen to persist for a definite period of time. The specific way in which the contents of a personality are organized constitutes his uniqueness. "The individual carries his uniqueness even unto his thumb prints as criminals know to their cost."<sup>39</sup> To be self in the true sense is to be more uniquely and more thoroughly organized. Radhakrishnan considers that at the ultimate point of such organization the individual human self passes over into the universal. Similarly, the uniquely individual becomes identified with the absolute subject. This is an interesting approach to the problem of identity between the individual and the universal self; some would aver that it is contrary to what is delineated by orthodox vedanta, and, at any rate, thoroughly incompatible with it.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

*Self as Subject*

Now to come to the second line of thought on the matter of the self, namely, on the self as subject, Radhakrishnan writes: "The self as an organized whole is to be distinguished from the self as subject."<sup>40</sup> The latter is the problem for metaphysics in the real sense of the word. The subject of experience and the object experienced must be distinguished. The subjective self is not the same as the organized self, whose unity is only teleological. The subject is only an onlooker or witness which persists through the various stages of the drama of life in perfect self-identity. But Radhakrishnan would hold that though "the subject of experience is said to be distinct from moment of the experience", still "it is the persistent substratum which makes all knowledge, recognition and retention possible".<sup>41</sup> No teleology is possible without this substratum; teleological unity is made possible by this persisting unity.

Radhakrishnan takes issue with those who argue "that the series of experiences is aware of itself as a series". He is critical of Hume particularly because he reduces the subject to the object and makes the self a bundle of conscious happenings, and could not find the persisting "I" among his mental states. This is a matter on which a great deal has been written by Indian philosophers of the past and present. The matter is so well-known that it is hardly worth labouring here. No other single theme is more elaborately discussed than this one. Much has been written on it. Old arguments are repeated and fresh arguments, perhaps only seemingly fresh than really so, are advanced by a number of writers even today. It may be that the matter being of such crucial importance to Indian philosophy, and being of such perennial interest, this is as it should be. Radhakrishnan uses several commonplace arguments to show that the subject is prior to all experiences. "There is", he says for example, "no explanation as to why the rapidly passing experiences hang together as the experiences of one and the same individual."<sup>42</sup> It may perhaps be not too difficult to concede that a series of successive events, occurring in a particular order even, by itself cannot account for the fact that a particular thought is referred only to a particular person and not to any other. The law of association as Kant has pointed out long ago, and as

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

Radhakrishnan reaffirms, is alone not sufficient to account for a self, which is more than a mere haphazard bundle of experiences.<sup>43</sup>

Radhakrishnan's argument centres around the main point that a teleological view of the human personality requires the identity of the human self, the sameness of the "I", which is subjective, and persists unchanged through all the changes caused by the permutations and combinations of experiences. William James, who "looks upon the passing thought as the subject of experience",<sup>44</sup> is criticized. James, Radhakrishnan says, is wrong in believing, or at least speaking as if he believed, that every individual thought is itself a separate "I", which goes on assimilating the past thoughts into itself and thus preserving a kind of self-identity<sup>45</sup>. A number of contemporary vedantic writers have joined issue with James on this point. We know that there are also several Western philosophers who have looked with disfavour upon James' view. James Ward for instance is of the opinion that William James has confused process and content as well as subject and object.<sup>46</sup> Ward contends that every moment of experience must be viewed under the three aspects of attention, feeling and presentation.<sup>47</sup> The last one is objective, while the first two are subjective and as such constitute the real self. The first two are the same as remembering, thinking and willing, rather than the contents remembered, thought or willed. While Radhakrishnan cites Ward's criticism of James, he points out that the notion of the self that Ward substitutes "is far too abstract",<sup>48</sup> which is postulated merely "for the purpose of explaining experience".<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 269.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 269.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. William James' own statement: "Each pulse of cognitive consciousness, each thought dies away and is replaced by another.... Each later thought, knowing and including thus the thoughts which went before, is the final receptacle—and appropriating them the final owner—of all that they contain and own."—*The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 339-340; also *Text book of Psychology*, p. 216.

<sup>46</sup> James Ward, *Psychological Principles*, pp. 379f.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 29f.

<sup>48</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 270.

<sup>49</sup> Ward could object to this remark and contend that he is no supporter of abstraction, for he states, "The I of the 'I am', the sole text of the 'rational psychology' that Kant criticized and equally the I of the 'I think' of Descartes'

Ward's view is comparable to the "I think" of Kant, which accompanies all experiences. The "I think" of Kant is apriori in character, known neither through introspection nor through memory. Kant maintains that there is a changeless passive entity, "which remains the same yesterday, today and for ever", which accounts for the synthesis involved in the teleological structure of constantly changing experiences, which are always related to it.<sup>50</sup> For Kant, this is the ground of all categories and that which makes possible the empirical unity of consciousness,<sup>51</sup> but while Radhakrishnan recognizes that Kant's thought is quite cogent, he is afraid that the self which is the subject of the "I think" can be, as it often is, represented "as a mere logical form which accompanies all objects of consciousness."<sup>52</sup> However he is certain that the "deeper strand of Kant's thought does not favour the view of self as an abstraction."<sup>53</sup> All this, again, is in line with the attempted redefinition, or better, clarification, nowadays common, of the vedantic notion of the self in the light of Kant and some Western idealists. Radhakrishnan cites Kant, Plato and Aristotle for testimony to the view of the self he here advocates. "When Plato says that the mind in man is the offspring of the eternal world-mind, when Aristotle speaks of an 'active reason' at the apex of the soul . . . when Kant distinguishes the synthetic principle from the merely empirical self, they are referring to the self as subject."<sup>54</sup>

*The Reason for the Identification : Unity and Concreteness of the Individual*

We must try and find out the reason for the identification of the self as subject and the self as organized whole. In summary, it is the need to invest the individual with both transcendent unity and empirical concreteness. The fear exists that if one of

*Cogito ergo sum*, if taken as a *res completa* is an abstraction. But that pure subject or Ego which we reach in our analysis of experience at its rational level stands for no abstraction so long as we are content to distinguish it without attempting to separate it from its objective complement, the non-Ego."—Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 379.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

these is absent the conditions for complete individuality will not be fulfilled.

The self as an organized whole would be considered concrete while the self as subject would be considered a unitary individual. Radhakrishnan is aware that each idea has its dangers. He points out that, although now obsolete, there was the atomistic psychology "which analyses the stream of consciousness into separate units and accounts for the course of the stream by the interplay of these units".<sup>55</sup> Against this atomistic psychology he invokes Gestalt psychology which "holds that the stream of consciousness is not a sum of elements but a configuration in which every distinguishable part determines and is determined by the nature of the whole". For, "thoughts and their relations are unified wholes of subordinate parts and not mechanically added sums of independent units. The self is a unity which is more than a sum of its subordinate parts".<sup>56</sup> The question is, how is it possible for the organized whole to be a unity? "Unity" must be more than a metaphorical synonym for "totality". The possibility of the self losing individuality is permanently there, even in terms of the gestalt whole. This warrants us to undertake the quest for the real source of individuality, which Radhakrishnan finds in subjectivity. "The deeper unity is that which Kant refers to as the transcendent self."<sup>57</sup> But, organization and subjectivity are complementary to each other. The subject that is not immanent in the organization is in peril of losing its concreteness and becoming a metaphysical, even a logical, abstraction. That of course is the defect of Kant's dualism. Commenting on Kant's purely abstract notion of self-hood, he suggests what the real self is: "It is not an abstract form of self-hood, for it is that which manifests itself in the organization of the empirical self."<sup>58</sup> The concreteness of the self is the same as the organized wholeness of its being. The transcendent unity of the self in reality is not abstract, for it reveals and realizes itself in and through the empirical organization of personality. This is a different approach to the problem of concreteness from that of the Advaita. For the Advaita too, the self is concrete, to

<sup>55</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 265.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

be sure, but not expressed and realized in personality; for it, the self is subjectivity that negates personality and regards personality as a super-imposition (*adhyāsa*). For Radhakrishnan, the self, far from being a negation of personal existence, is identical with personality intensified and accentuated to the point of infinity. But it also needs to be specifically emphasized that unity can be expressed through the organization because the unity of the self is transcendent, standing above every organization. Thus the unity of the self in the organized whole of personality is not a production but a manifestation.

If, as already noted, in identifying the self as the subject with the self as the organized whole, Radhakrishnan runs counter to the vedantic tradition, he is not without support from some philosophers of the Western tradition. The most notable among Western philosophers with whom Radhakrishnan has an identity of views on this matter is Herder. Herder puts forward his ideas in his work called *God : Some Conversations*. Very much like Radhakrishnan, he argues that the uniquely organized individual is the same as the subject and also that uniqueness in organization and consequently individuality is possible because of the presence of the subject. In view of the very great affinity between Radhakrishnan and Herder on this point we will quote some of the conversations<sup>59</sup> that seem especially pertinent. The speakers are Philolaus, Theophron and Theano.

The question is put by Philolaus: "What in you is self-dependent, actively constant and constantly active? What are you yourself, Theano?" Theano answers: "My form belongs to me, but I am not my form. That the picture of my childhood tells me. That every mirror tells me in joy and sorrow, in health and sickness." The conversation continues:

Theophron: And yet in this change of circumstances you were, and are always the same individual.

Theano: Not in my fancy. That changed with the years. Not in what we call taste, love, affections. They too are garments which we imperceptibly change . . . .

Theophron: Thus if the centre of self-hood does not lie in the realm of sense, of fancy, taste and desires, where does it lie?

Theano: In myself. It seems to me that the word does not allow any further dissection, either as idea or feeling. I was a

<sup>59</sup> J. G. Herder, *God: Some Conversations*, pp. 210-213.



child and I grew up, was ill, slept and awakened. In all these changes which befell me, internally and externally, not only was I called, but I felt myself and called myself the same.

Theophron: The principle of self-hood did not depend on you, as though it were caused by reasoning, and had to be maintained by reflection; as though it depended upon this and without it would disappear.

Theano: How could this be? That in spite of all changes, my body and spirit do not remain the same, but I remain the same, a self does not depend on my reasoning . . . .

Theophron: Thus the conviction of our self-hood, the principle of individuation, lies deeper than our understanding, our reason, or our fancy can reach. You have hit it, Theano! As feeling and idea it lies in the word "self" itself. Self-consciousness, self-activity make up our actuality, our existence. Upon them rest the ladder of our developed and undeveloped powers, inclinations and actions, which reach from earth to heaven.

Finally, Philolaus enters the conversation and speaks thus: "Enough my friends. Every additional word would be superfluous. I see the one and eternal principle of individuation developed in the system of our philosopher,<sup>60</sup> along a line which leads into our innermost self. The more life and reality, that is, the more rational, powerful and perfect energy a being has for the maintenance of a whole which it feels belong to itself to which it imparts itself entirely, the more it is an individual, a self."

As the translator of Herder's book points out, Herder "finds everywhere in the universe three principles operating: the tendency of things to persist in their own essence, the attraction of likes and the repulsion of opposites, and the principle of self-assimilation and reproduction."<sup>61</sup> Of these the first and the third interest us most, as they bring up Herder's similarity with Radhakrishnan very poignantly. The principle of self-assimilation or self-absorption is very significant. Professor D. M. Datta observes, in a way that would underline the employment of this principle by Radhakrishnan, "The more the self is developed the greater is the reality it can absorb and identify itself with."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Presumably this is a discussion on Spinoza's view of individuality.

<sup>61</sup> J. G. Herder, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>62</sup> D. M. Datta, *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 90.

In the case of either thinker it may not be necessary to take the principle of self-absorption as standing for an extensive view of self-development, for it may in fact represent only an intensive view, according to which what is aimed at is a progressive uniqueness of individuality.

### *The Problem of the Universal Self*

Radhakrishnan equates the universal Self with the fulness of personal being. The concept of uniqueness is very important for him. Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that the purpose behind every act of organization is the establishment of uniqueness. The supremely organized or integrated self is the supremely unique self. He believes that the supremely unique individual passes over into the universal. "The two elements of self-hood, uniqueness (eachness) and universality (all-ness) grow together until at last the most unique becomes the most universal."<sup>63</sup> Complete individuality is the same as universality; individuality merges with universality. Personality meets the highest individuality or universality at the point of its highest integration. It is also noteworthy that Radhakrishnan thinks that no personal individual can be individual in the ultimate sense, for that would be the universal. Ultimate individuality or universality is a universe of all possible individuals. "While every individual fulfils his real function in the whole and obtains value and dignity, no one individual is as wide as the whole itself. It is limited because it is only one individual element in what is much greater than itself."<sup>64</sup>

### *Personality Transcends Itself*

Individuality is conceived as a continuous progression, of which personality is not the limit, but only a tentative and temporary expression, although a very legitimate expression. Not the person but the universal self is the terminus of subjectivity. Subjectivity is not rooted in personality but in the universal Self. This marks a crucial difference between Radhakrishnan and the personalists. In the personalistic type of thought person is the essence of subjectivity,<sup>65</sup> while in the other it connotes a

<sup>63</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 274.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>65</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *Spirit and Reality*, p. 45.

transitional stage, which is definitely meant to be transcended. One has "to break from the confines of personality into the unfathomed reaches of true being" by "disciplined effort." Only "by penetrating through the layers of manifest personality the individual arrives at the unconcerned actor of life."<sup>66</sup> The destiny of personality is to transcend itself. Radhakrishnan declares:

In Patanjali's Yoga Sutra we have a development of what Plato calls recollection, the way by which we steadily withdraw from externality, from our functions which are at the mercy of life and enter into our essential being, which is not the individual ego but the Universal Spirit. It is the act of recollection by which the recollecting self distinguishes its primal being from all that is confused with it, its material, vital, psychological and logical expressions.<sup>67</sup>

A distinction between the inner essence of personality and the outward, psycho-somatic and logical structure, in which personality is manifested, has to be made. The former is the individual ego and the latter is the real self, the substratum.

Radhakrishnan condemns the tendency "to overestimate the place of the human self". This was the mistake of Descartes.

Descartes attempts to derive everything from the certainty of his own isolated self-hood. It is not realized that the thought of the self which wants to explain everything, the will of the self which wants to subjugate everything, are themselves the expression of a deeper whole, which includes the self and its object. If the self is not widened into the universal spirit, the values themselves become merely subjective and the self itself will collapse into nothing.<sup>68</sup>

However, in transcending manifest personality the Self does not negate it; it only fulfils it. Manifest personality or empirical self is not an illusion: this is where Radhakrishnan's Philosophy is characteristically different from the Advaita. Manifest

<sup>66</sup> *Occasional Speeches and Writings*, p. 204.

<sup>67</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*) pp. 71-72.

<sup>68</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 274.

personality or empirical self, although not "a self-contained individual," far from being an illusion, "is the expression or focussing of something beyond itself".<sup>69</sup>

Radhakrishnan's intention is to fight pluralism without becoming a supporter of illusionism. Human personalities are not monads (recall Radhakrishnan's fight against pluralism, with which he couples personalism). They are rather creative processes or syntheses which take place in the universal self. "Human individuals are not unchanging substrata of change with accidental qualities and related to one another externally but are elements in an interrelated system. They are centres of experiences or processes of becoming through a creative synthesis of their relations".<sup>70</sup> The interrelation between human individuals is essential, internal; this is a sign of the fact that at bottom there is a relationless, universal unity of the self.

Yet the fact that the self is universal is not prejudicial to the reality or significance of the psycho-somatic and logical "body", called individual personality, through which it is expressed. Its reality and significance are derived from the universal self. Human individuality is the counterpart of the environment. The two are equally real.<sup>71</sup> And the two "co-exist and subsist together".<sup>72</sup>

Personality or self-conscious individuality introduces the dualism between subject and object. In the pre-personal state there is no such dualism, yet there is no individuality in the proper sense. Real unity is trans-personal and not sub-personal; not the sheer absence of dualism but the resolution of dualism by going above it. Thus personality is a necessary condition for the realization of the universal self.

At the biological level, there is no such thing as an individual centre of life. The cells in an organism are unintelligible apart from the whole. Their life is centred in the life of the whole. While plants and animals lead "whole" lives harmoniously, human beings set up discord between themselves and their environment. The unity between the organism and the

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

environment which is a striking point in the sub-human world becomes sundered in the human. While the human being belongs to a larger world which penetrates him at every pore and lives through his interactions with it, his self-consciousness sets up a dualism which is untrue to fact and opposed to his whole nature. He forgets that his interests are not private to himself and believes himself to be distinct with his own form and individuality.<sup>73</sup>

"This strong sense of individuality" which is "necessary for action", must be distinguished from "individualism". Individualism proclaims man's separateness from the universal self. Conscience is a reflection of this individualism and, accordingly, is "a sign of a divided life". "He (the separated individual) is a flame of unrest full of uncertain seeking and disorder. So long as the individual suffers from separateness he is restive and homesick. He is always striving to get beyond his separateness"<sup>74</sup>. Objectifying itself is a process through which the self realizes itself. The person realizes the self by the deepening of its self-awareness, not by growing in an external sense. Real deepening of the personality is a movement towards its centre, namely, the self. Personality can reach its centre only when it realizes that the self which is at the centre is not the individual ego but the universal self. And automatically interior expansion goes hand in hand with deepening. Only thus can the duality between subject and object be overcome, that is to say, by so expanding the subject as to include itself and the other. The subject integrates the object with itself, thereby becoming the subject more truly. The duality is not overcome by reducing the subject and the object to a third, neutral reality. The overcoming of the duality is consequent upon the realization of the universal self or subject. Again we note that there is a striking similarity between Radhakrishnan and Herder on this point as well. Herder too is concerned about removing the barrier between subject and object and proposes to expand the subject to include both. And, also, pursuing the problem of individuality, he too arrives at the conclusion that there is only one true self: God. "The more spirit and truth, that is, the more active reality, knowledge and love of the all to all there is in us, the more we possess and enjoy

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 272-273.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p. 273.

God, as active individuals, immortal and indivisible. He alone in whom all is, who comprehends and sustains all can say: "I am the Self. There is none other apart from me."<sup>75</sup>

Radhakrishnan believes—and in this Herder would support him—that there is a progressive movement from primitive, undifferentiated unity through complexity to transcendent simplicity. Human personality is more complex than nature.<sup>76</sup> The ultimate in complexity is simplicity, as the ultimate in diversity is unity. The intermediate states of complexity and diversity are not invalid, but are transcended and fulfilled by simplicity and unity. Unity and simplicity are the same as universality and universality is the same as perfect integrality. That is Radhakrishnan's position.

#### *Advaitic Universalism, Personalism and Integration*

Radhakrishnan seeks to combine universalism with the essence of personalism. And so do Herder and some other thinkers of the Western tradition. The task is onerous indeed as we realize that universalism and personalism are antithetical to each other in their view of the self. Advaitic universalism implies the denial of the personal self as personalism implies the denial of the universal self.

For the Advaita the Atman is the supreme, universal self. It does not consist of parts (*niravyaya*); it is omnipresent (*vibhū*). The *jīva* or the individual self is the product of limiting adjuncts, the sense organs and the four internal organs *manas*, *buddhi*, *aṁkāra*, and *citta*, psycho-physical entities which give rise to ego-hood. Owing to these limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*) the one Self appears to be many.<sup>77</sup> The internal organ in its four-fold form is the individuating principle. The limiting adjuncts which include the internal organ and the external organs, are the creation of *māyā* in the form of ignorance (*ātmamāyaviśar jīta*).<sup>78</sup> These are not real as they are the products of *māyā*. Thus *jīva* (individual self) is a construction of *māyā* or *avidyā* (ignorance). When *avidyā* is destroyed the underlying reality or Atman persists.<sup>79</sup> On the

<sup>75</sup> J. G. Herder, *Op. Cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>76</sup> *The Idealist View of Life*, p. 272.

<sup>77</sup> *Saṅkara's Bhāṣya on Māndūkyakārikās*, iii. 3—from J. Sinha, *Op. Cit.*, p. 491.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 15—from J. Sinha, *Op. Cit.*, p. 491.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 25—from J. Sinha, *Op. Cit.*, p. 491.

destruction of the psycho-physical organism, which the phenomenal personality really is, the *jīva* (the individual self) merges in the Atman.<sup>80</sup> The search, therefore, is for the Self underlying the person, not for the self as the person. The sense of distinction between the *jīva* and the Atman is not ultimately real (*pāramārthika*) but only phenomenally real (*vyāvahārika*), and it is due to the limiting adjuncts caused by *avidyā*.<sup>81</sup> The distinction will persist until the knowledge of absolute identity with the Atman or Brahman dawns upon the *jīva*. The ego-hood is annulled by ultimate insight (*samyaग्दर्शना*). The universal self is compared to ideal space (*ākāśa*), which is essentially indivisible, and all individuation to artificial division.<sup>82</sup> The search in the Advaita is for the ideal self that underlies all empirical differentiations, and the ideal self is one. It is not a participant in any activities of differentiation at all; nevertheless it is the reality that persists in all and through all. Hence it is called *sākṣin* (the witness). While the empirical differentiations come into being and pass away, the self is eternal, immutable and indestructible.<sup>83</sup> The idea of *sākṣin* comes originally from the famous Upanishadic parable of two birds perched on a tree, one of whom eats the fruits while the other without eating watches, the silent self withdrawn from enjoyment.<sup>84</sup> *Sākṣin* is spirit or self transcendent over psychic individuality (*antaḥkaraṇa*).<sup>85</sup> "Saksin" is the universal subjectivity of Atman expressed in relative terms to the objectivity of the empirical self or *jīva*. Atman is not the object of self-consciousness as *jīva*, is, but it is the witness of self-consciousness.<sup>86</sup> For this the support of the Upanishads can be cited. Thus advaita's procedure is to reclaim the ideal universal self underlying the empirical person, negating the objectivity thereof.

On the other hand, Radhakrishnan in claiming the ideal, universal self, as indeed he does, so reconstructs it as to include the truth of objectivity or, in other words, the essentials of personal being. This is the main difference between the unitary and

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 3, 4.

<sup>81</sup> *Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on Vedānta Sūtras*, i. 2.20.

<sup>82</sup> *Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Kāvya*, iii. 6.

<sup>83</sup> *Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on Vedānta Sūtras*, i. 1.4, Bhāmati Notes.

<sup>84</sup> *Mundaka Upaniṣad*, III, 1, 1-3.

<sup>85</sup> *Vedānta Paribhāṣya*—from M. Hiriyanna, *Op Cit.*, p. 344; *Antaḥkaraṇopahitah Sākṣi*.

<sup>86</sup> *Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on Vedānta Sūtras*, i. i. 4.

the integral. "He is a universal God who Himself is the universe which He includes within His own being. He is the light within us, *hṛdayāntar jyotiḥ*",<sup>87</sup> writes Radhakrishnan in his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*.<sup>88</sup> "The *jīva* is only a partial manifestation of the Supreme. The integral, undivided reality of the Supreme appears divided into the multiplicity of souls. Unity is the truth and multiplicity is an expression of it and so is a lower truth and not an illusion".<sup>89</sup> Transcendence of the Universal Self is not negative, but positive, inclusive of all levels of being in their essence, including the personal. Personal being has the highest significance because it is at its level that we can apprehend the meaning and the being of the supra-personal. "The peculiar privilege of the human self is that he can consciously join and work for the whole and embody in his own life the purpose of the whole".<sup>90</sup> In fact, by way of parenthesis it is to be observed, that it is on this crucial consideration, among other things, that Radhakrishnan bases his argument in support of the doctrines of Karma and Rebirth.<sup>91</sup> Criticizing Pringle-Pattison for denying rebirth to human persons he observes, "Professor Pringle-Pattison does not seem to recognize the ineffable worth of individuals and the need for letting them have other opportunities".<sup>92</sup> Personality is transcended by the Self by including and fulfilling it. It is an immanent transcendence. "Those who worship the transcendent Godhead which embraces and transcends all aspects realize and attain to the highest state, integral in being, perfect in knowledge, absolute in love and complete in will".<sup>93</sup> By way of explaining Śāṅkara's attitude, he writes, "It is because Śāṅkara finds the essence of personality in its distinction from other existences that he contends that the *Ātman* . . . is not a person".<sup>94</sup> As for himself he points to a way of going beyond separateness or distinction, one which is primarily moral and spiritual. The metaphysical realization will follow and result in integral

<sup>87</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> This is very akin to the Upanishadic concept of *antaryāmin*, on which Rāmānuja builds his whole conception of Divine immanence in the soul. It reminds us of the mystic notion of "self of my self".

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>90</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 273-274.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>92</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, pp. 222-223.

<sup>93</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 274-311.

<sup>94</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 485.



experience. The very stuff of personality can be used to overcome the limitations it usually implies.

Explaining Radhakrishnan's view, Professor D. M. Datta observes, "In realizing his unity with the universal self or his own spiritual existence man becomes one with the universe. The internal conflicts among the different aspects of his life, passions, desires, feelings, thoughts all disappear".<sup>65</sup> He continues, "Only at this stage can we speak of the human self as being completely organized and becoming a self in the truest sense".<sup>66</sup> Again, the attainment of perfect unity with the universal self "is possible in religious intuition, where intellect, will and feeling are fully integrated and man is one with the spirit in him".<sup>67</sup> This is so because religion is the central principle of integral experience. Professor Datta reflects Radhakrishnan's position correctly.

Now we pass on to personalism. If Radhakrishnan's universalism is distinguished by the fusion with it of the essentials of personalism, his personalism is distinguished by the presence of the universal principle in it. Thus the difference between the ultimate standpoint of Radhakrishnan and that of the personalists is marked. Personalism, of course, as observed, stands at the opposite pole from universalism of the Advaita variety.

Personalism is of two main kinds, philosophical and psychological; we may say that both may be religious. Among this philosophical personalists we have the metaphysical personalists and the existentialists. They are all equally opposed to universalism. Kierkegaard's opposition to Hegel's universal and his substitution of the individual in its place are well known; his is a strong protest against universalism as an approach to the problem of the self or spirit. Nicolas Berdyaev, criticizing Hegel for giving to the self the universal rather than an individual connotation, observes: "Hegel is a universalist who fails to apprehend the mystery of the personality and of the relationship of one personal spirit to another".<sup>68</sup> Kierkegaard's category of the Single One, Max Stirner's category of the Unique One,<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche's

<sup>65</sup> D. M. Datta, *Op. Cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>68</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *Spirit and Reality*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>69</sup> The Single One renounces all others in a radical solitariness; the Unique One denies primary existence to all others—Joseph Blau in *Review of Religions*, Vol. XIII, November 1948, p. 62.

category of the Superman are all protests against universalism of the self.<sup>100</sup> There are other philosophical and religious personalisms that are not in any conscious opposition to the universal. We may say that they are all generally concerned with the problem of the *person*. Martin Buber may be cited as one of the finest examples of a philosopher dedicated to the quest of the person. He considers the human person "to be the irrevocable central place of the struggle between the world's movement away from God and its movement towards God". And the decisive battles of the spirit are fought "in the depth, in the ground, or the groundlessness of the person".<sup>101</sup> Buber regards the "person" as an answer to the errors of both collectivism and individualism.

Many idealists among the contemporary psychologists are vitally concerned with the problem of personality. Now, it needs to be observed that *person* and *personality* are significantly different concepts. It is in terms of the latter that the idea of *integration* becomes relevant, for in the last resort psychology is empirical and practical. For the psychological personalists man is "an individual who integrates a diversity of inherited and acquired qualities into a total personality".<sup>102</sup> Jung the greatest of all the personalists among the psychologists quotes with approval Goethe's words: "the sons of earth find their greatest joy in personality alone" and adds: "every one's ultimate aim and strongest desire lie in developing the fulness of human existence called personality".<sup>103</sup> The psychologists, however, are not, and cannot be, concerned with the question of the universal self at all, because psychology is not metaphysics. But psychology raises problems for metaphysics; on the whole its unarticulated assumption is that the self is not universal. Empirical psychology may be considered as standing at the opposite pole from vedantic universalism because it is grounded in the empirical consciousness.

Naturally, Radhakrishnan has much more in common with the philosophical personalists, particularly the existentialists, because of their assertion "that man is not an object to be known

<sup>100</sup> Recall S. Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*; F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

<sup>101</sup> Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, p. 70.

<sup>102</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, p. 252.

<sup>103</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 281.

but a subject with a self to acquire".<sup>104</sup> Yet he would regard existentialism also as a "transitional phase of individual development". Commenting on it he observes: "In this quest for Being every man is alone. It begins in man himself, for inward leads the mysterious path." Again: "Thus, through an analysis of the finite and contingent character of human existence, through logic and morality, we apprehend the reality of a Being which is not existence, of a Self which is not object, of a Spirit which is not actual. This Being, Subject, Spirit is not an object presented to thought. It is the basis and source of thought".<sup>105</sup> Speaking of self-knowledge he continues: "It is the intuition of Being, knowledge of the ontological self, the living depth of human existence." Finally, "Existentialism is a stage in man's pilgrimage through life. It has to transcend itself; for an analysis of the human predicament reveals the fact of God as Being and God as Perfection." That is the destiny of personalism. Therefore, Radhakrishnan will not have much sympathy for personalism that presents itself as the terminus of truth.

The doctrine of the person of the philosophers of the existentialist tradition, however, reflects the emphasis on the individuality and subjectivity of the self most powerfully, and Radhakrishnan welcomes this. Yet he wants individuality to be complemented by universality, and he is sure that this can be done, without injury to the special emphasis of existentialism on the individual. However, while a mutually intelligible dialogue between the two positions ought to be initiated and can be profitable, it is still worth enquiring whether there is in either position *ex-hypothesi* something that conflicts with the main emphasis of the others. But Karl Jaspers among the existentialists is quite akin to Radhakrishnan in thinking of the self as universal.<sup>106</sup> It needs to be pointed out that the insistence on the unitary with regard to the self in the Advaita is less reconcilable with personalism than Radhakrishnan's emphasis on the integral.

## 2. CONSCIOUSNESS

The Self being the knower, consciousness is knowledge.

<sup>104</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilpp. *Op. Cit.*) p. 51.

<sup>105</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilpp. *Op. Cit.*) p. 59.

<sup>106</sup> Refer F. H. Heinemann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 64.

Accordingly, the problem of consciousness or knowledge is cognate with that of the self. Following the method employed throughout, Radhakrishnan approaches the problem of consciousness also from two angles: on the one hand, consciousness is treated as a given fact, on the other, as a production. The given fact is universal; the produced experience is individual.

The fundamental fact of a universal consciousness is the presupposition of all knowledge. . . . In one sense, our knowledge is the manifestation of a universal principle; while, from another point of view, it is dependent on a sensible process, which must be stimulated from without by appropriate objects . . . . While, in one sense our knowledge is our own, in another it is independent of us who possess it.<sup>107</sup>

This two-fold approach is necessary for Radhakrishnan, because in the place of the unitary consciousness he substitutes the integral; the integral, as always, is an interpretation of the unitary. The question of consciousness is of central importance as it is directly relevant to the problem of self-evidence in knowledge.

#### *Consciousness as a Production*

In the first place Radhakrishnan detects an evolutionary movement that has resulted in the emergence of the self-conscious individual. The whole of Chapter VI of *An Idealist View of Life*, entitled "Matter, Life and Mind", is devoted to this.

Thus primarily, consciousness which is a production must be regarded as a product of evolution. A continuous thrust towards self-consciousness is what we see in the pattern of evolution from matter to mind. If consciousness is evolutionary, then, it is also functionally maintained. "The observed phenomena are not consistent with the existence of a soul independent of the body. The mind of an animal is not an "anima" in control of its body, but is the organization of its acts which are mental. Conscious phenomena are determined by physiological influences"<sup>108</sup> As though to make the fact more poignant, he continues: "When the heart ceases to beat, consciousness lapses. Three or four deep inhalations of nitrogen mean loss of consciousness;

<sup>107</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 306-307.

<sup>108</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 260.

restore oxygen in the lungs, consciousness reappears." Furthermore, environment and inter-relations between individuals are vital conditions for consciousness. "The environment is not something unrelated to the conscious organisms. It belongs to them. The world in which they live is not a physical world. The individuals and the environment together form one whole. The individuals exist among others and struggle with them."<sup>109</sup> In quite Aristotilean terms Radhakrishnan observes: "The soul is the actuality of the organic body in man, even as vision is the actuality of the eye."<sup>110</sup> Yet, "while the conscious arises from or emerges out of the vital or the biological, it is as real as the biological, from which it emerges and represents a kind of interaction with things different from the vital."<sup>111</sup>

Now, the emergence of self-consciousness in the total, indivisible process of nature involves a certain break, although it is true that "the process of nature is one, supple and continuous."<sup>112</sup> Surely we do not have in the world process realms or spheres of being, that will justify our dividing it into parts, but we do have modes or phases of activity.<sup>113</sup> In terms of this we can plausibly maintain the position enunciated below:

In self-conscious beings we meet with a set of phenomena quite distinct from the physical or the vital or the merely conscious. Reflective mind is quite different from the unreflective mind of the infant or the animal. When the plain man protests that men are not to be confused with apes, he declares that however primitive man may be, he is still distinctly human. . . . The reflective capacity of the human mind and its power of free invention are not merely complications of lower instincts. It is the essence of self-conscious intelligence to look before and after and to vary action according to circumstances. Instinct does neither. When we pass from animal to man, we find not a gradual development but a sudden break, a leap into a new form of experience.<sup>114</sup>

The continuous scale of evolutionary movement represents the casual factor in the rise of self-consciousness. Yet causation must be completed by creativity;<sup>115</sup> else we cannot account for the

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

break in the series. "Between self-conscious man and life in the sub-human level there is a gulf. No account of scientific observation can help us to explain the astonishing change."<sup>116</sup> The biological characteristics of heredity and variation, "the pervasive ones of *horme* and *Mnema*," "which correspond to conation and memory at the human level,"<sup>117</sup> all indicate the creativity of nature. Likewise, teleologically speaking, a mystery is connoted by self-consciousness. "Aristotle says that the soul is to the body what the vision is to the eye, or axeness is to the axe. The most detailed examination of the physical and the physiological constitution of the eye will not explain the phenomenon of sight, even as the examination of the form and the material of the axe will not explain the act of cutting."<sup>118</sup>

Thus, in sum, it is asserted that consciousness although a product of evolution is not a product in an absolute sense, in the sense in which naturalists will want to think of it. Radhakrishnan condemns "the cheap godless naturalism of the intellectuals,"<sup>119</sup> "who try to reduce consciousness to neurological happenings."<sup>120</sup> However, he does not deny that both in the evolutionary and functional senses, consciousness is the result of a process, but the inner meaning and mystery of the process have to be properly discerned, "The crux of all philosophy is this, that the sense organs and the neurological processes of the body, which is in space and time, seem to produce consciousness."<sup>121</sup>

From consciousness we pass on to knowledge proper. Ultimately the two are not distinct; knowledge is consciousness realizing itself through free-will. Once self-consciousness has arisen, the self-conscious being must continue the rest of the evolutionary process by deliberation and choice. Man through his knowledge becomes a participant in the creative movement. "The urge in nature which seeks not only to maintain itself at a particular level but advance to a higher becomes consciousness in man who deliberately seeks after rules of life and principles of progress."<sup>122</sup> Human beings, "who are first among nature's children who can say 'I', can substitute rational direction for the slow, dark, blundering growth of the sub-

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>119</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 16.

<sup>120</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 253.

<sup>121</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 481.

<sup>122</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 276.

human world."<sup>123</sup> Consciousness becomes for man the self-conscious being, the free-willing participant in the creative activity of the universe, knowledge, which consists in sensory and rational processes. If consciousness can be truly described as a product or the result of a process in the evolutionary and functional senses, then we can describe knowledge in the higher sense also as something produced or brought about by a process. By the same token, we are also debarred from speaking of knowledge as a production in the absolute sense. Man's knowledge is creative work, "which is not blind imitation or mechanical repetition," but "synthetic insight which advances by leaps."<sup>124</sup> Sensation and reasoning are only occasion or condition for the rise of knowledge. "It is fairly obvious that the great philosophers admit that the root principles are articles of faith, and not attained by argument. They are not arrived at through the senses, or by the ordinary processes of logical reasoning. Conviction arises only through our realizing them as the common ground of all our knowledge."<sup>125</sup> Without the presence of the eternal subject in the mind of man "sensations would be blind and concepts barren."<sup>126</sup> It shows that concepts and precepts are not together sufficient for true knowledge. All this is a pointer to the fact that knowledge—as also consciousness in the more generic sense—is not entirely a production. In order to find out the true nature of knowledge we have to see it from the other angle as well. The inside of knowledge is intuition, and intuition exists because processes of knowledge have an inner story to tell. Yet processes remain valid. Scientific and artistic knowledge, mysticism and integral experience are, in one manner of speaking, processes. But they point to something beyond the process.

#### *Consciousness as a Universal Fact*

The problem of consciousness is one of the central problems for Vedanta. All schools of Vedanta say that consciousness is underived, self-existent and one. There are other systems, chiefly the Sāṅkhya and the Jaina, that also maintain that consciousness is underived and self-existent, but not that it is one. The differentia of the vedantic system, particularly, the advaitic school, is that it insists on the unity of consciousness. Now Radhakrishnan

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p. 277.    <sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175.    <sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.    <sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.

as a vedantist and an advaitin accepts the unity as well as the underived and self-existent nature of consciousness. For the Advaita consciousness is universal. Atman is both *sat* (truth) and *cit* (consciousness). Atman is undifferentiated consciousness (*nirviśeṣacaitanya*); it is trans-phenomenal (*niśprapañca*). It is the eternal, and unitary consciousness in essence (*nityaikāra-saviṇḍāptimātrasattaka*). It is the pure, transcendent, undifferentiated, eternal, unoriginated and indestructible consciousness.<sup>127</sup> The universal consciousness underlies all cognitions as their witness (*sarvapratyayasākṣin*).<sup>128</sup> All objective entities, and all cognitions are revealed by it as they cannot reveal themselves.<sup>129</sup> The appearance of objects and the particularity and differentiatedness of cognitions arise due to *avidyā* (ignorance). With the destruction of *avidyā* all distinctions vanish.<sup>130</sup> The particularity of consciousness is due to a gigantic error that pervades all empirical existence. The attainment of universal consciousness, therefore, for the Advaita is an unqualified return to the unitary, a withdrawal from differentiated consciousness.

Radhakrishnan accepts the advaitic definition of consciousness as a universal fact. The following statements will testify to the assertion: "The fundamental fact of a universal consciousness is the presupposition of all our knowledge."<sup>131</sup> "Consciousness must be assumed as a primal fact, and not explained in terms of non-conscious factors."<sup>132</sup> "Surely, the non-conscious cannot be the cause of the conscious. If anything the conscious must be the cause of the non-conscious."<sup>133</sup> Human knowledge which is a manifestation of universal consciousness, is strictly more than individual. "Knowledge is the distinguishing feature of human consciousness and it is incapable of derivation from anything else."<sup>134</sup>

The centre of all consciousness is the Atman; yet the Atman operates through individual centres of consciousness, which are infinite in number. That is the view of Radhakrishnan. This is different from the position of the Advaita. Radhakrishnan

<sup>127</sup> *Sankara's Bhāṣya on Kena Upaniṣad*, ii. 4

<sup>128</sup> *Sankara's Bhāṣya on Māndūkya-kārikās*, iv. 60, 92; *Īśa Upaniṣad*, 6

<sup>129</sup> *Sankara's Bhāṣya on Prasna Upaniṣad*, vi. 6

<sup>130</sup> *Sankara's Bhāṣya on Māndūkya-kārikās*, iii. 35.

<sup>131</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 306.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, p. 481.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, p. 493.

<sup>134</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 263.



writes, "The hasty logic which declares because the one is the real, the many are an illusion, is corrected in the view that the one reveals itself in the many."<sup>135</sup> "The many," however, are not eternal, self-existent monads; they are simply manifestations of "the one". The one lends the many their being. The individual consciousnesses are dynamic, synthetic unities of process. It is not so much a unity-in-diversity, but a unity that transcends, at the same time includes and completes, diversity. Process itself is very important and it is in no way opposed to transcendent consciousness as it is really a dynamic method of realizing and expressing the latter.

#### *The Postulate of Avidyā*

The process side of consciousness, on which depend multiplicity and particularity, is regarded as purely negative by the Advaita of the traditional type. But Radhakrishnan makes *avidyā* positive. Radhakrishnan and traditional advaitins regard *avidyā* as the root of the principle of conscious individuation, with the difference that while the latter regard *avidyā* as error, the former does not do so. Whereas the advaitins treat the processes of individuation as negative determinations, Radhakrishnan treats them as positive moments in the primary consciousness. For the advaitins, consciousness is not active. As a result, acts of knowledge are not acts in which consciousness itself is active; they are, however, negative and erroneous ways through which the reality of the one universal consciousness is witnessed to. Even the erroneous cannot exist without the true underlying it. But there can be no forward movement through the steps in a false path toward the realization of the true; the elaborate method of realization worked out in Vedānta is one of systematic retreat to the primary awareness. *Avidyā* and process are interchangeable for Vedānta—as also for Radhakrishnan. So there is no real point in regarding one of them as the cause of the other. To do so would be using circular reasoning. *Avidyā* expresses the concept of process, in the true ontological fashion of Vedānta. For the Advaita, processes are not the activity of consciousness, but something that have yet got to be referred to it. Accordingly, *avidyā* is described as that which posits itself. It is *anirvacanīya*, indefinable. Paul Deussen

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

calls *avidyā* "the innate obscuration of our knowledge."<sup>136</sup> It is postulated as an explanation for the rise of the consciousness of individuality. We cannot say that it is a property of universal consciousness, nor can we say that it is independent of it for no consciousness can be independent of it. The psychological subject "me" (*aḥampratīyaviśaya* or *asmāṭpratīyaviśaya*) is an erroneous self-perception of the universal consciousness, the metaphysical subject, the "I".

Whenever we are not content to accept *avidyā* on theological authority as a fact that posits itself and want epistemologically to explain the inexplicable, we are confronted with logical contradictions. Epistemologically, we cannot accept *avidyā* to be a transcendent category, coeval and identical with the universal Atman, nor can it be regarded as a real entity and apart from the Atman. For this reason it is housed in a pale and shadowy state between being and non-being, from where it is not lifted into the light of definiteness. Many writers from ancient times on have found out the contradiction in the concept. "If *avidyā* exists in Brahman, what is its cause? It cannot be anything different from Brahman. Nor can it be Brahman since it is of the nature of right knowledge. It cannot contradict its nature. Therefore the concept of *avidyā* is irrational."<sup>137</sup> This is the verdict of Parthasarathi Misra, a follower of Kumarila the champion of Purva-Mīmāṃsa. Professor S. N. Dasgupta rejects the concept in these words, "The concept of *avidyā* is thus plainly unintelligible and inconsistent."<sup>138</sup>

Radhakrishnan, however, does not reject it; rather he seeks to go to the root of the paradoxical idea of *avidyā*. True to his religious sensibility, he finds *avidyā* to be a paradox that can be understood only religiously. It is not, he argues, conscious dissimulation, but the unconscious tendency of the finite mind, which lives by the imperfect standards of this world.<sup>139</sup> Philosophically, *avidyā* involves itself in a real difficulty. Radhakrishnan tells us, "Śāṅkara escapes from the difficulty by declaring *avidyā* to be inexplicable."<sup>140</sup> He is one with Śāṅkara in reaffirming the real purport of the *avidyā* doctrine. "In knowing, the knower

<sup>136</sup> Paul Deussen, *The System of the Vedānta*, p. 302.

<sup>137</sup> *Śāstratīpikā*, p. 314—from Sinha, *Op.Cit.*, p. 531.

<sup>138</sup> S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 13.

<sup>139</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 575.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 577.

is establishing an identity with the known.<sup>141</sup> Real knowing is being what we know.<sup>142</sup> He underscores the logic of identity which has necessitated the postulation of *avidyā*. But as his conception of identity is governed by the integral, he transforms *avidyā* from a negative into a positive status. Sankara says that *avidyā* is to be defined as neither being nor as different from it.<sup>143</sup> But in the hands of Radhakrishnan that which is neither being nor non-being is turned into something that is both being and non-being.<sup>144</sup> Radhakrishnan declares that *avidyā* is "positive in character".<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, it cannot be the cause of individuality, for it cannot exist unless there are individuals.<sup>146</sup> Each individual is "a centre of universal consciousness".<sup>147</sup> (The fuller consideration of *avidyā* as the indefinable category will have to be undertaken in consonance with *māyā*, with which it is cognate.)

In all these ways Radhakrishnan attempts to integrate consciousness as universal fact with consciousness as process. Consciousness as the universal fact is always in the background; the reality of the process is not negated by it. Furthermore, with regard to man's realization of the absolute consciousness, it is noticed that always progress in knowledge is the condition. Radhakrishnan wants to render progress meaningful and its logic positive. Thus ultimate knowledge for him is not gained by withdrawal or systematic return to the foundational consciousness, but rather by advance to the culminating point of the process of knowledge. This is an important difference.

*Consciousness, Foundational and Consummatory—the Crux of the Problem of Self-evident Knowledge*

It is clear that the problem of consciousness is central to the theories of self-evidence. The divergence in the comprehensive approach to consciousness between Radhakrishnan and the classical theory of the Advaita has been coming to light gradually in the fore-going discussion. Now we must continue considering the difference between the two, but now in relation to the question of self-evidence. We would be reflecting the position

<sup>141</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 158.

<sup>143</sup> *Sankara's Bhāṣya on Vedānta Sūtras*.

<sup>145</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 582.

<sup>147</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 124.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>144</sup> P. T. Raju, *Op.Cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 576.

accurately if we state that while the Advaita emphasis is on the foundational, Radhakrishnan's is on the consummatory. Radhakrishnan accepts the foundational, to be sure, but a full examination of his thought would suggest that he thinks of it as a fact, a condition that needs to be interpreted and actualized by individual consciousnesses both divine (Īśwara) and human. Radhakrishnan's doctrine of Īśwara or the personal God has its relevance here too, apart from other contexts. Īśwara is the eternally self-fulfilled and self-complete individuating process of consciousness. Yet Īśwara is not different from Brahman even as we human beings are not different from it.

The *Bhāgavata* makes out that the one reality which is of the nature of undivided consciousness is called Brahman, the Supreme Self or God. He is the ultimate principle, the real self in us as well as the God of worship. The Supreme is at once the transcendental, the cosmic and individual reality. In its transcendental aspect, it is the pure Self unaffected by any action or experience, detached, unconcerned. In its dynamic cosmic aspect, it not only supports but governs the whole cosmic action and this very Self which is one in all and above all is present in the individual.<sup>148</sup>

The ultimate goal of self-conscious individuals is to be like Īśwara, that is to realize identity with the eternal consciousness, where the process of individuation consummates.

In Radhakrishnan's thought the character of self-luminosity or self-evidence is attributed in a more predominant way to consummatory integral experience than to the foundational consciousness; so much so, the integral nature of the consummatory experience is made to reflect back on the foundational consciousness itself. Often, while talking of the foundational he unnoticeably glides off into the consummatory. Consummatory, integral experience is presented as an achievement of self-integration, by which all the faculties of personality are organized, directed and completed by mystic intuition. To such experience is attributed the qualities of self-evidence or self-luminosity. Describing the character of this experience Radhakrishnan writes:

<sup>148</sup> *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 24.

To study the nature of this experience is rather a difficult matter. . . . It is a type of experience which is not clearly differentiated into a subject-object state, an integral undivided consciousness in which not merely this or that side of man's nature but his whole being seems to find itself. It is a condition of consciousness in which feelings are fused, ideas melt into one another, boundaries broken and ordinary distinctions transcended. . . . Consciousness and being are not there different from each other. All being is consciousness and all consciousness being. Thought and reality coalesce and a creative merging of subject and object results.<sup>149</sup>

As a result, "the privacy of the individual self is broken into and invaded by a universal self which the individual feels as his own."<sup>150</sup> This is what is truly called self-established (*svata-siddha*), self-evidencing (*svayahvedya*), self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*). By complete integration of one's personal faculties and by fulfilling one's innate potentialities one arrives at this experience which is self-evident and self-luminous; and elliptically this consummatory experience itself is said to effect complete integration of the self and fulfilment of potentialities.

On the other hand, orthodox Vedanta does not consider self-evidence of knowledge in terms of this kind of consummatory experience, though as a spiritual discipline it also aims at consummation of experience. But it does not appear that it considers self-evidence and self-luminosity to be the result of such an experience. It is not achievement of any kind. It is transcendent but not in the sense of mysticism or integral experience. Primarily, the source of our knowledge of it is dogma, the scriptures (*pramāṇa*). Secondly, it employs the method of guided reflection on experience. "Vedantic epistemology like any other epistemological system, is based upon common experience. It has no reference to any uncommon or mystic experience. The problems it tackles are problems that arise through reflection upon this common experience."<sup>151</sup> For the Advaita, universal consciousness is axiomatic; it is propounded as a postulate of postulates to explain, or, rather to explain away, common experience. Religious experience is not un-

<sup>149</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>151</sup> G. R. Malkani, *Vedantic Epistemology*, p. xiii.

common experience and it plays no significant part in the postulation of universal consciousness. Professor A. C. Mukerji, while interpreting Sankara takes issue with Rudolph Otto, though less polemically than with Deussen, for maintaining that for Sankara "the intuitus mysticus" is a first-hand and immediate fact and possession of the mystical mind."<sup>152</sup> (*Mysticism East and West*, p. 31.) "There is, no doubt," Professor Mukerji continues, "a place for mysticism in Sankara's doctrine of self-realization; but his theory of knowledge, we believe, is free from any mystical element."<sup>153</sup> The orthodox vedantic view is that every genuine experience of man, while it may be positive in its own level, is also a problem posed for the next level. This should lead us to look for theoretical answers that will be ultimately valid, without themselves becoming problems needing further solution. Thus although religious experience may be answer to some other problem at a lower level it becomes itself a problem. However, there is a tendency, when one possesses the mystical experience, not to ask questions about that experience but to silence all questioning by the ineffable light of that experience, so much so one may never solve the problem it raises. "All questions that arise at this level are laid at rest through an over-powering sense of the infinite rather than through an internal resolution of those questions through knowledge."<sup>154</sup> This is wrong. We should try to solve the problem that religious experience poses by critically analyzing it. Religious experience, thus critically understood, is the most effective means of transition from the objective attitude in experience to the subjective. Religious experience involves a criticism of all common experience and points to that which implies the denial of its own reality as well as the reality of all experience. This is unitary consciousness of the universal "I". Thus religious experience has a mediatorial role, but one that is entirely different from that role it plays in Radhakrishnan's thought. For the advaitins, the "I" which is the basis of self-evidence is never known objectively. It is *spoken* (*aparokṣa-vyavahārayogyatvam*), but never *spoken about*.<sup>155</sup> It is *meant* and *spoken*. But it is not known in the objective attitude (*ajñāte sati*).<sup>156</sup>

<sup>152</sup> A. C. Mukerji, *The Nature of Self*, p. 298.

<sup>154</sup> G. R. Malkani, *Vedantic Epistemology*, p. 107.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

As a formulation of the principle of self-evidence this goes beyond any other that we know, including the *cogito ergo sum* of Descartes. K. C. Bhattacharya says,

No meanable truth is self-evidencing, its negation being at least a problem in meaning and yet the self-evidencing I is the type of truth. The implication is that meanable truth which cannot be denied to be truth has to be realized as self-evidencing, not by being objectively thought but by the spiritual cultivation of a subjective attitude.<sup>157</sup>

From the axiomatic and self-evidencing principle of the "I," the advaitins go to a universal Self:

This (i.e. what we have described above as axiomatic self-evidence) raises another problem: Is there really an entity, a greater Self, behind what we know as *I* and of which the *I* is a symbol? The *I* that we know is something momentary. It arises with a mental act and disappears with it.<sup>158</sup>

The advaitins assert that all that the arguments against it really prove is "not that the self is momentary, but only that the self-form, or the *aham-kāra*, i.e. the *I*, which we apprehend as momentary, is not the real self".<sup>159</sup> Here Vedānta is at one with Buddhism, according to which also the momentary self is of the nature of not-self (*an-atta*). But while Buddhism does not go beyond this negative thesis, Vedānta does.

The different approaches to the problem of self-evidence by the Advaita and Radhakrishnan is explicated below in summary form:

(1) For orthodox Vedānta, self-evidence is a characteristic of consciousness as such, that is, of basic consciousness. For Radhakrishnan, it is a property of the ineffable, mystical or integral experience. "The three noteworthy features of spiritual experience are reality, awareness and freedom."<sup>160</sup> "We picture it as a glowing fire, a lucid flame of consciousness ever shining and revealing itself. In the divine status reality is its own imme-

<sup>157</sup> K. C. Bhattacharya, *The Subject as Freedom*, p. 28.

<sup>158</sup> G. R. Malkani, *Vedantic Epistemology*, p. 111.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>160</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 102.

diate witness, its own self-awareness, its own freedom of complete being."<sup>161</sup>

(2) For orthodox Vedanta, self-evidence is what we find when the whole of common experience including the mystical is silenced. For Radhakrishnan, on the other hand, self-evidence is a property derived from the ideal possibility of an abiding integral experience. "If some part of our experience comes to us with these characteristics (of indubitability etc.), it implies the possibility that all experience is capable of being received in the same manner."<sup>162</sup>

(3) For orthodox Vedanta, self-evidence, on which philosophy is to be built, is nothing but the primeval self-awareness of the subject, which pronounces judgment upon all processes of knowledge. It has nothing to do with the sense of assurance that comes in feelings of a special order. For Radhakrishnan, on the other hand, the self-evidence, which is to serve as the foundation of philosophic structure, is that which consists in a certain inner certitude of feeling, of exalted mood, verging on some kind of self-forgetting rapture. The state to which our individual self has been lifted radiates a certain assurance about that with which it is in contact, and one is rendered incapable of doubting that assurance. In that state "the tension of normal life disappears, giving rise to inward peace, power and joy."<sup>163</sup> "The experience is felt to be profoundly satisfying, where darkness is turned into light, sadness into joy, despair into assurance." It is "a mode of being which is completely real" and "we cannot question the actuality of the experience itself."<sup>164</sup> Radhakrishnan sounds as though the self-evidence of knowledge in that state derives from a "positive feeling of calm and confidence".<sup>165</sup> This inner certitude before an ineffable experience, in which our feelings are infinitely deepened, exalted, integrated, not to say chastened and purged, seems to be, for Radhakrishnan, the foundation of all reliable knowledge.

(4) For orthodox Vedanta, the property of the axiomatic foundation of knowledge is imparted to logical relations, at least to such ones as non-contradictoriness and identity. These last-named logical relations are themselves not regarded as axiomatic, because their self-evidence is ultimately a derived

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.



property and not an intrinsic one. All objects are known and all relations are established—and dissolved—in the light of the universal consciousness. All the different views of Vedanta are agreed on this:

They are found when analysed to contain the common element that perception takes place only when the object is brought into connection with the self or the witnessing consciousness, either by a revelation of an identity between the two through the removal of the differentiating factors, or by tinging of the subject with the form of the object, or by removal of the veil of ignorance that hangs between the self and the object.<sup>166</sup>

Mystical or integral experience must render itself amenable to be judged by the same rules as are applicable to other experiences. Mystical experience is in no sense consummatory, because it is no more than an identification with a presumed infinite and transcendent object, God. The axiomatic criterion of self-evidence of the subject, the only reliable one, transcends it. That also contains an erroneous identification which must be cut asunder by the sharp sword of the persistent and ever-present axiom. In principle knowledge is always with us. The axiomatic, ideally, is the consummatory; that in all.

#### *A Comparative Evaluation*

For Radhakrishnan, integral experience is the consummatory experience of self-evidence. It is not subject to any other criteria; it is self-certifying. It is not something that one possesses before passing through the perfect mystical experience. It is also the culminating point to which all our knowledge-seeking enterprizes must move. According to Radhakrishnan, "self-knowledge is not the beginning of wisdom but its final consummation, and is the fruit of intuitive realization".<sup>167</sup> For the orthodox, self-knowledge is not only the consummation of wisdom but also the beginning of it. Radhakrishnan arrives at self-knowledge through integral experience. (However, we must not really forget that "self-knowledge" is an ambiguous concept. When used by those of the Perennial Philosophy persuasion,

<sup>166</sup> D. M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing*, p. 80.

<sup>167</sup> Schilpp, *Op.Cit.*, p. 139.

such as Radhakrishnan is, it has the ethical-spiritual, consummatory sense, which the well-known precept "know thyself" suggests. On the contrary, when used by the vedantists, it has the distinct connotation of an axiom.) Radhakrishnan is inclined to the view that ultimate, dependable and self-evident knowledge of reality is something which is always present to us as a *possibility* which is yet yonder, and which we shall also achieve by adopting certain processes. These processes include aspiring for super-normal experiences, deepening our imaginative power, sharpening our wits and welding the various faculties and potentialities of our personality into an integral unity. Mr. Huxley speaks of it as a technique, as "fulfilling the necessary conditions of direct spiritual knowledge".<sup>108</sup> These conditions mean for Mr. Huxley making ourselves loving, pure in heart and poor in spirit.<sup>109</sup> There is, however, something questionable with the idea of *achieving* self-evident knowledge by means of some techniques. Either self-evident knowledge is innately with us or it will never be achieved.

There is strength in the position of the orthodox vedantists here. Therefore they are right in basing knowledge on the subject, axiomatically. But they too, being dedicated to the proposition that knowledge is self-realization—to which all logic and psychology is ultimately devoted—, aim at converting what is axiomatic, without indeed ever departing from it, into what is consummatory.

To consider the attainment of absolute self-knowledge as the goal of philosophy and life is inalienable from the fundamental position of Vedanta. For, after all, what is the purpose in pointing to the axiomatic, self-evident self-knowledge? Surely not to facilitate our enquiry into the realms of nature or into the laws of mathematics, better. The intrinsic goal of Vedanta as a system of philosophy must not be forgotten. Classical Advaita does speak of the consummatory realization of self-knowledge. However, on the whole, it finds strength always in tenaciously adhering to the axiom it postulates. All other reasoning radiates from the axiom and converges on it.

The strength of the Advaita is the strength of dogmatism. On the whole, however, it is easier to be dogmatic about an a priori epistemological axiom than about a goal of consummatory

<sup>108</sup> Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

experience. Radhakrishnan's whole effort in this direction springs from a strong desire to substitute a realizable truth, an actualizable experience, in the place of a dogmatic axiom. The effort surely is in keeping with the felt need to make self-evidence conform to standards of testable and verifiable truth, although thereby the door is opened to empiricist challenge, rendering the position somewhat more vulnerable.

### 3. REALITY

Reality concerns the third element in the proposition setting forth integral experience, namely the known. This problem is dealt with, apart from other places, most systematically and consistently in the last chapter of Radhakrishnan's *An Idealist View of Life*, entitled "Ultimate Reality". As in the case of the self and consciousness, here too the problem is viewed from the process end, the universe, as well as from the transcendent end. The universe or the world, the sum-total of the process, stands to the transcendent reality, Brahman, in the same way as the organized self stands to the transcendent self and the produced consciousness stands to the universal consciousness.

#### *Reality as the Universe of Process*

Radhakrishnan marks certain pervasive characteristics of the world.<sup>170</sup> "First, it is an ordered whole. We find an unbroken continuity, a complete unity from the changes in the atom to the movements in history." "Secondly, every existent is an organization with a specific mode of relatedness." "Thirdly, the organisms tend towards greater interactive union with their surroundings or environment." "Fourthly, in the continuous flow of nature there is neither repose nor halt. Nature is never satisfied with the level it has reached." "Fifthly, the changes are not meaningless. The physical world is not a futile play of senseless atoms engaged in a deadly conflict. They are making things, and by exerting our control we can make them do the things we desire.... From the barely existent void or waters (*apraketaṃ satilam*) all this has emerged and is making for a profound co-operative and spiritual commonwealth with freedom and harmony as its marks." "Sixthly, the highest kind

<sup>170</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 312-313.

of experience we have seems to be all-inclusive and to produce personalities possessing such experience seems to be the end of the cosmic process."

Radhakrishnan takes note of the explanations of the cosmic process given by naturalism, holism, emergent evolution and ingressive evolution. He advances several criticisms against the first three positions; but he is much more favourably inclined towards the last. However, he is willing to see truth in all these philosophical systems. Whitehead's platonic version of the cosmic process is referred to with some degree of approval. Whitehead's position enunciated below is acceptable to Radhakrishnan:

The ingreducence of eternal objects into events is the explanation of the historical becoming. The universe is a developing series of events, revealing a hierarchy of grades and values. At every step we have the emergence of what is genuinely new, that was not in existence in any previous phase of the line of advance. Change is not a mere unfolding of what is implicit, or a rearrangement of constituents with nothing new in the whole they constitute. The highest cannot be adequately explained in terms of the lower. Every event is a miracle, an event from above. It embodies an idea from beyond and a satisfactory cosmology should account for it. Whitehead suggests an eternal order and a creative reality. The cosmic series has a *nisus* towards the eternal order which is beyond itself, though it is increasingly realized in the cosmic.<sup>171</sup>

"He (Whitehead) believes in one realm of reality that is both natural and spiritual, and protests against two diverse orders of being."<sup>172</sup> "The relation between God and the world is for Whitehead one of immanence and interpenetration."<sup>173</sup> Radhakrishnan generally approves of much of what Whitehead says in this regard. But he makes a distinction between God and the Absolute. Process belongs to God but the Absolute is above process. But then God and Absolute are identical. "The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God, and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view."<sup>174</sup> "We call the Supreme Absolute

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 326-327.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345. This is a distinction that Radhakrishnan makes throughout his works. Cf. *The Spirit in Man (Contemporary Indian Philosophy)*, p. 490.

when we view it apart from the cosmos, God in relation to the cosmos."<sup>175</sup> The world and God are not really apart. "The world is as indispensable to God as God is to the world."<sup>176</sup> The universe is actually the overflowing and one mode of the self-realization of the Absolute.<sup>177</sup>

However, Whitehead also manifests the fundamental difficulty of the other systems mentioned, which is there inasmuch as they regard the process of the universe as self-sufficient and self-explanatory. Naturalism Radhakrishnan considers to be altogether in the wrong. There is no room for novelty in naturalism, the goals of the process in naturalism are always implicit from the beginning. (However, it must be pointed out in fairness to naturalism, that Radhakrishnan misunderstands its nature in that he regards it as identical with mechanism;<sup>178</sup> the long history of naturalism's protest against mechanism has been ignored.) Holism is a better account of the process than naturalism, because it gives some room for creativity. "The general process of the formation of greater and greater wholes is truly creative in the sense that the goal of the process is not implicit in the beginning."<sup>179</sup> However, holism is inadequate because it visualizes the creative power as a *holistic force* and not as transcendental spiritual being. This accounts for Smuts' astounding position: "Mind is not at the beginning, but at the end, but Holism is everywhere and all in all."<sup>180</sup> Alexander's emergent evolution is "a brilliant attempt to frame a general metaphysical scheme in consonance with modern scientific developments" but it too "suffers from certain fundamental disabilities".<sup>181</sup> "Its 'emergence' is just the problem... Alexander finds the explanation in a *nisus* or thirst of the universe for higher levels. Unless we assume the *nisus* to be a spiritual power ever drawing on its resources and ever expressing new forms, Alexander's whole account becomes unsatisfactory."<sup>182</sup> It is wrong to think of the *nisus* as an unconscious drive. "The creative spirit which is responsible for the *nisus* is not the result of the universe, as Alexander and others imagine, but its source as well, as the great religions and philosophies assert."<sup>183</sup> Lloyd Morgan is also

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 314 ff.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318. Cf. J. C. Smuts, *Holism and Evolution*, p. 335.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

guilty of making God completely immanent, although he "infers the coming of divinity from the purposeful direction of the universe."<sup>184</sup> Bergson, the advocate of creative evolution, in spite of his more generally acceptable position as a whole, often falls into the rut of thinking "that the whole evolution of life with its progressive manifestation of structure is latent in life."<sup>185</sup> Speaking about the creative power of the universe, Radhakrishnan observes: "There is no reason why we should identify it with vital force or life, as Bergson suggests, and not with spirit, for spirit is the highest we know."<sup>186</sup> Now, coming to Whitehead's ingressive evolution, with which Radhakrishnan's position has the most similarity, it is observed with satisfaction that here "God is the ground and the goal of the whole evolutionary scheme."<sup>187</sup> But unfortunately God is not entirely free from the process, for "God in Whitehead's scheme is affected by the process of reality." "His nature finds completion only in terms of the world process. In any case he has a past which is irrevocable and a future which is not yet."<sup>188</sup> God's transcendence is mentioned by Whitehead in some places but it is in such a way as to make transcendence of none effect. "God is immanent in the world and the world in God. As God transcends the world, the world transcends God."<sup>189</sup> Transcendence becomes mutual.

Radhakrishnan, however, underlines with approval, although qualifies, the main emphasis of all these movements, namely, that reality is to be understood as the whole of cosmic process.

Reality is a whole and acts and advances as a whole. The control of the whole is present in the growth of the parts, whether they are chemical compounds or cultural movements. The process of the world is a creative synthesis, where the formative energy, local situation and cosmic control are all different factors. The final end is not contained in the beginning. The interest and attractiveness of the end cannot be divorced from the process which leads up to it.<sup>190</sup>

God's immanence is an ideal to be completely attained at the

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 339-340.

end of the cosmic process. God who appears to be the consummation of emergent being is in reality the transcendent manifesting itself progressively in and through the steps in the cosmic process.

God, though immanent, is not identical with the world until the very end. Throughout the process there is an unrealized residuum in God, but it vanishes when we reach the end; when the reign is absolute the kingdom comes. God who is organic with it recedes into the background of the Absolute. The beginning and the end are limiting concepts, and the great interest in the world centres in the immediate process from the beginning to the end.<sup>191</sup>

### *Reality as the Transcendent Absolute*

The conclusion has already been reached that "the historical world of becoming is incapable of explanation from within itself."<sup>192</sup> It is this fact, Radhakrishnan believes, that is brought out by the famous "proofs" for the existence of God.<sup>193</sup> "Spirit is the reality of the cosmic process."<sup>194</sup> It is the transcendent Absolute that manifests itself as the creative power of the universe. Radhakrishnan, as always, tries to reconcile the different points of view of Śankara and Rāmānuja; according to the former of whom, the universe is *Brahma vivarta* (illusory appearance of Brahman),<sup>195</sup> while according to the latter, the universe is *Brahma pariṇāma* (self-evolution of Brahman).<sup>196</sup> The difference becomes one of perspective. He admits: "The great problem of the philosophy of religion has been the reconciliation of the character of the Absolute as in a sense eternally complete with the character of God as a self-determining principle manifested in a temporal development which includes nature and man."<sup>197</sup> He continues: "The identification of the absolute life with the course of human history suggested by the Italian idealists may be true of the Supreme as God of the world, but not of the Absolute, the Lord of all worlds."<sup>198</sup> "Evolution may be a part of our cosmic process, but the Absolute is not subject to it."<sup>199</sup>

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>195</sup> Hiriyanna, *Op. Cit.*, p. 372.

<sup>196</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 343.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

<sup>198</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 343.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

"The world of pure being is not exhausted by the cosmic process which is only one of the ways in which the Absolute Reality which transcends the series manifests itself. The Absolute is the foundation and prius of all actuality and possibility."<sup>200</sup> "The abiding 'I am', the changeless centre and the cause of all change is envisaged as the first term and the last in the sequence of nature."<sup>201</sup> The Absolute or Brahman is transcendent to the true process even as realization is transcendent to progress."<sup>202</sup>

### *The Transformation of the Principle of Māyā*

For the Advaita, *māyā* is very important. Brahman, the Absolute is real; the universe is an appearance. This is established by the aid of the *māyā* postulate. Śankara's tripartite formula, Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal, the finite self is Brahman and nothing else, makes the situation as simple as can be. The situation is explained by the following passage:

The world of plurality and diversity including finite selves has no reality. It is an illusory appearance super-imposed on the pure unity of consciousness in the same manner in which an illusory snake is falsely imposed on a piece of rope which is to be regarded as the reality underlying the illusory appearance but not affected by it in any way. The world appearance is due to *avidyā* or *ajñāna* (false knowledge) and is cancelled by true knowledge."<sup>203</sup>

*Avidyā* is cognate with *māyā*. Of course it is not suggested that the world-appearance has no empirical reality in the same way as "the son of a barren woman" has no empirical reality. But it is unreal or (*mithyā*) from the standpoint of absolute knowledge. Hence the world is *anirvācanyā* (indescribable or indeterminate). All these add up to the famous doctrine of *māyā* (illusoriness of the world). Radhakrishnan performs the difficult feat of converting *māyā* into the creative principle accounting for history, the universe, individual souls etc. In order to explain the universe Vedānta has always employed a doctrine of the degrees of error, primarily with a view to making plausible empirical distinctions between the absolutely non-existent (*asat*), the illusorily existent

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>203</sup> Kalyan Chandra Gupta, *Monism* p. 313.



(*mithyā*) etc. Radhakrishnan has substituted this with an inverted scale of the degrees of truth, according to which the heightened individuality of the saint or the genius, the ordinary individuality of the common man, the less individual existence of the animal, matter etc. will take their places in a descending order of reality. For Radhakrishnan, nothing is absolutely unreal except what is absolutely non-existent. "No element of our experience is illusory, though every element of it has a degree of reality according to the extent to which it succeeds in expressing the nature of the real."<sup>204</sup>

The *anirvacanīya* theory (*anirvacanīyākhyātivāda*) is central to the doctrine of *māyā*. The Advaita establishes this theory by criticizing the theories of other schools, which explain the knowledge of empirical reality differently, viz. *asatkhyātivāda* (the theory of knowledge of the non-existent), *ātmakhyātivāda* (the theory of knowledge of the self or a mode of consciousness), *akhyātivāda* (the theory of no knowledge), *satkhyātivāda* (theory of knowledge of the existent).<sup>205</sup> The *anirvacanīya* theory, on the contrary, is the theory of knowledge of the indeterminate or indescribable, or, to borrow the Kantian phrase, indeterminate perception, which is to be contrasted with determinate knowledge. *Anirvacanīyatva* or indeterminateness is the characteristic of *māyā* in terms of the orthodox vedantist thought. Śāṅkara has clearly stated it beyond the shadow of a mistake. *Māyā* is "neither absolutely real (*satyam*) in the sense in which Brahman alone is real, nor is it utterly non-existent (*asat*) like the "son of a barren woman" or a "square circle."<sup>206</sup> The theory receives further strength from the fact that for Vedānta and Śāṅkara, this root epistemological problem is ultimately soteriological. "The belief that the world is real is the source of all miseries and it is only the knowledge of Brahman as the only ultimate reality with which the finite self is identical in essence that can lead to *mokṣa* or salvation."<sup>207</sup> The matter being of such vital consequence, Śāṅkara and Vedānta would not permit imaginative freedom to any one to interpret this doctrine in any other way. But Radhakrishnan does use plenty of imaginative freedom and re-interprets the doctrine in his own way. The result is that the vedantic doctrine of *māyā* is given a transformation which is

<sup>204</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 334.

<sup>205</sup> K. C. Gupta, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 316-346.

<sup>206</sup> K. C. Gupta, *Op. Cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

partly Hegelian and partly Bergsonian, and in an even more pronounced way Whiteheadian. Radhakrishnan boldly reinterprets Śāṅkara himself. This has naturally roused the opposition of the orthodox and neo-orthodox scholars, who want a more rigorous account of Śāṅkara's view than is offered by Radhakrishnan. Writes Radhakrishnan:

It (*māyā*) is for Śāṅkara a mixture of truth and illusion. It partakes of the characteristics of both being and non-being (*sadasadātmaka*). Although, herefore it has a lower form of reality than pure spirit, it is not non-existent. While Śāṅkara refuses to acquiesce in the seeming reality of the actual, he does not dismiss it as unreal phantasmagoria. It is not determinable either as real or as unreal (*sadasadbhāyām anirvacanīyam*).<sup>208</sup>

He does recognize the strict implication of the *anirvacanīya* theory, as the last sentence in the above quotation shows. But he has already prefigured the kind of transformation he means to give to it in the second sentence: "It partakes of the character of being and non-being." Then he goes on to explain the transformation. "Its (the world's) truth is in being, reality, truth (*sat*); its multiplicity and division, its dispersal in space and time is untrue (*an-ṛtam*)."<sup>209</sup> Professor P. T. Raju is right when he says with apparent approval that Radhakrishnan transforms what is neither being nor non-being into what is both being and non-being in Hegelian fashion.<sup>210</sup> It is interesting to note that Tagore also treats *Māyā* as both is and is not.<sup>211</sup> Raju is also right in surmizing—from the suggestion of a pundit whom he quotes—that Radhakrishnan's doctrine stands midway between those of Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja, for the Rāmānujist position is that of *Satkhyātivāda* (the theory of knowledge of the existent), "according to which, it is the existent alone which can be revealed in any form of experience,"<sup>212</sup> and the world is a real creation of God. Radhakrishnan is thus a mediator as well as a re-interpreter. He is also in no small way an original thinker.

<sup>208</sup> *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 89.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>210</sup> *Idealist Thought of India*, p. 340.

<sup>211</sup> *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 38.

<sup>212</sup> Kalyan Chandra Gupta, *Op. Cit.*, p. 321.

## II

INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE AS *YOGA* AND  
AS *DARŚANA*

So far we have been engaged in exploring the dimensions of integral experience as a new metaphysics of religion, as a version of the perennial philosophy, as a theory of self-evident knowledge. Integral experience is concerned primarily with the knowledge, or realization, of ultimate reality. Advaita Vedānta is the most notable among the classical philosophical systems that is concerned with the same. In both Vedānta and integral experience the barriers between religion and philosophy break down. Radhakrishnan's integral experience is advanced as a new interpretation—in his own thinking the most authentic interpretation—of Advaita Vedānta. The search is for reliable religious knowledge; it is for that purpose that self-evident knowledge of reality is sought.

We started with Kant and we must come back to him. Kant said that the unconditioned reality cannot be known by finite minds. To know it one requires an original intuition, an *intuitus originarius*, as Kant put it. But man does not possess it, for it is the prerogative of the Original Being, and can never belong to a being which is dependent in its existence as well as in its perception, and in fact is conscious of its own existence only in relation to given objects.<sup>213</sup> Man only possessed the *intuitus derivativus*, which working under the forms of space and time was only capable of sensuous perception.<sup>214</sup> Kant simply postulated the unconditioned reality as well as an Original Being, who possessed the original intuition, in whose knowledge reality existed.

The answer of the stricter vedantic writers would be two-fold. (i) The knowledge, the knower and the known are all one; (ii) it is identical with the self, wherever the word "I" can be significantly spoken the "intuitus" exists. In sum it asserts, what is true is self-evidently true; the "I" is self-evidently true; all truths derive from this self-evident truth; it is axiomatic, which means not only that it is just postulated as possibly existing in

<sup>213</sup> Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant*, (selected), p. 38.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

some Ultimate Being, but as real, belonging to the self. This forms the bed-rock of vedantic thought.

Radhakrishnan emphasizes not so much the axiomatic reality of this *intuitus* as the consummatory reality. He thinks that the self-evident *intuitus* is something to be achieved by a positive movement towards complete integration of the self and all the faculties of the self. This also necessitates the accentuation of all our inner potentialities to the point of infinity. For those who would be strictly orthodox, the goal is the elimination of all that stands for individuality and personality and that would require a special way of managing the faculties of man, so that they would eliminate themselves and the illusory will be known for what it is, or perhaps expurgated from the realm of knowledge altogether. For them, self and consciousness accordingly are unitary. But Radhakrishnan too accepts the unitary notion of self and consciousness in principle but straightway splits them up into components. Then he gathers them up from their empirical roots—biological, psychological, etc. and by leading them along through various levels of self-hood and consciousness, in accordance with an evolutionary scheme, brings them to a point of complete integration, where what is composed of parts would be restored to the unity which had all along been presupposed. Integral experience is a method by which self-evident knowledge of reality is sought to be realized, presuming, of course, that no such knowledge was in existence before the consummated integral experience brought it into being, although the ground of it, namely, consciousness, has always been there.

Integral experience in so far as it is dedicated to a religious goal aims at realization as well as vision. It is presented as both *yoga* and *darśana*. To be sure classical Vedānta is also both these. But there is a difference: the certainty of self-evident knowledge Vedānta possesses is based primarily on the authority of dogma and the result of guided analysis of experience leading to the axiom of subjectivity; whereas in the case of Radhakrishnan it is based most of all on the *anticipation* of ultimate realization. For Radhakrishnan every step in the forward movement of experience is authenticated by the degree to which it approximates and manifests the goal, thus revealing the qualities of the consummatory. We have to use the stuff of time *positively*, as a bridge to the eternal. In that sense realization is in the future for

every man, lying at the far end of progress. For the advaitins, the bed-rock of certainty is the eternal Self, which is reached by *cutting through* the negativities of the temporal processes and not by riding them. The method by which we do so is *yoga*. Although *yoga* is very important for the advaitin, the certainty of knowledge is not born out of the anticipated consummation of experience, promised by *yoga* as method of realization. The relative freedom from the need of imminent realization is one of the strengths of Vedanta as against integral experience or any philosophy based on mysticism. But the price it pays in exchange of experiential realization is dogmatism.

#### INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE AS *Yoga*

First of all let us treat integral experience as *yoga*. (It should be understood that "yoga" is used in the most general sense of method of realization and not in any specific, technical sense.) There is no doubt that Radhakrishnan wishes to treat integral experience as not only visionic but as also practical in nature, practical as concerning the mystical and spiritual discipline of individuals and issuing in certain spiritual consequences for the individual. As Professor Edgar S. Brightman points out: "Radhakrishnan dwells on the basic religious importance of the actual mystical awareness of the divine, in contrast to any and all theoretical assertions about it."<sup>215</sup> Radhakrishnan writes: "One metaphor succeeds another until God is felt as the central reality in the life of man and the world."<sup>216</sup> One of the central emphases of *The Hindu View of Life* is that integral experience is practicable, that it points to a spiritual achievement. There Radhakrishnan maintains that "the truth revealed in the Vedas are capable of being re-experienced on compliance with ascertained conditions."<sup>217</sup> Obviously, integral experience aims at ascertaining those conditions. He states further that "the Hindu philosophy of religion starts from and returns to an experimental basis."<sup>218</sup> "The mystics are specialists in religion who attempt to see God face to face..."<sup>219</sup> With regard to *mokṣa* the highest mystical state, he says that it is "a direct realization of something

<sup>215</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 399.

<sup>216</sup> *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 129.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>219</sup> *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 262.

which is existent from all eternity," "the heaven which is all the time here, could we but see it."<sup>220</sup> It arouses a "feeling of certitude."<sup>221</sup> "This is what gives ultimate satisfaction and all other activities are directed towards the realization of this end."<sup>222</sup> Radhakrishnan has no doubt that *mokṣa* is immediately available, in history itself, although "historicity ceases with realization."<sup>223</sup> In *mokṣa*, individuals "retain their individualities as long as the world process continues. The released souls at the moment of release do not pass into the stillness of the Absolute, but secure a steady vision of the oneness of it all."<sup>224</sup> The experiential basis is most strongly stressed. "To say that God exists means that spiritual experience is attainable. The possibility of this experience constitutes the most conclusive proof of the reality of God."<sup>225</sup> Atman or Brahman is "pure bliss" (*ānanda*) and "the completest consciousness."<sup>226</sup> Professor Brightman comments on these statements thus: "But these assertions are never meant to be taken as pure theory. The goal of union with Brahman is something to be verified empirically."<sup>227</sup> Writes Radhakrishnan: "The possibility of becoming one with God can be established only by the actuality of it."<sup>228</sup> Now the position of regarding integral experiences as *yoga* or practical method calculated to bring about the ultimate realization will raise some problems for logic which we will consider directly. But before we come to the logical problems there is one other question that presents itself for an answer. Will the *yoga* aspect of this philosophy not introduce an element of dogmatism from which it seeks so strenuously to be free? Radhakrishnan himself answers this when he replies to the criticisms of Swami Agehananda Bharati, who charges that Radhakrishnan's system, like Vedānta, is theology and not philosophy, because it lends itself to dogmatism. Radhakrishnan's reply is that "it is somewhat arbitrary to say that men of conviction are theologians and men who are in a

<sup>220</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 635.

<sup>221</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 96.

<sup>222</sup> *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 31.

<sup>223</sup> *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, (1926), pp. 685-f.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 685-f.

<sup>225</sup> *The World's Unborn Soul*, p. 21.

<sup>226</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 162; Cf. *The Reign of Religion*, p. 424.

<sup>227</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 404.

<sup>228</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 230.

state of doubt are philosophers.<sup>220</sup> Radhakrishnan would add that "Philosophy is a rebuttal of dogmatic assertions. It should offer rational evidence in support of its conclusions."<sup>220</sup> The question is: where does the conviction come from? Obviously it does not arise as conclusions of philosophy, for, it is prior to rational thought and guides and governs it. There are only two other possibilities. Either it must come from the dogmatic-cum-axiomatic source of Vedānta, from the scripture and subjectivity, or it must come from one's own personal experience. The class of mystics whom Professor Brightman calls "autobiographical mystics" base their philosophy on their personal experience. We also know that Radhakrishnan is reticent to be autobiographical. Furthermore, there is another difficulty: autobiography cannot be philosophy, but Radhakrishnan's integral experience is philosophy. Yet if the valid goal of philosophy is *mokṣa*, we cannot speak about it with less than the highest conviction. The conviction with which the philosophy of integral experience is presented does, however, have another and a better reason for its being than to be a practical assurance on our journey towards realization. That better reason is the vision it gives, and a vision as sublime as this cannot but be presented with earnestness and the confidence of knowing. If the *yoga* aspect of it is taken literally the contradiction pointed out above and some more, which will be dealt with below, will become inescapable. But perhaps Radhakrishnan does not intend us to take it literally. "I would feel most uncomfortable," he tells us, "among authentic monks who are, of course, very rare; for I am aware of my weaknesses. I am human, much too human, and I do not know whether I do not prefer to be human."<sup>221</sup> However, for the sake of completeness, we will deal with the logical problems that integral experience as *yoga* raises.

#### *Some Logical Problems*

(1) Can we have a religious or mystical discipline by which we can attain to absolute and self-evident knowledge of reality? Prof. P. T. Raju, who is usually a faithful interpreter of Radhakrishnan, has some significant things to say in this connec-

<sup>220</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*), p. 817.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 817.

<sup>221</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*), p. 817.

tion, which we believe is really according to the philosopher's mind. He criticizes Kant for the very reason for which Radhakrishnan criticizes him in these words: "He could not see the possibility of pushing our experience usually limited to the phenomenal world, beyond those limits through the process of inward realization."<sup>232</sup> Then he turns to Hegel and says, "Hegel's mistake lay in thinking that thought as such could do so." And he adds, "Here is the place for religion in its essence." He is speaking here in reference to the postulate of Kant that we have been discussing, and the allied postulates. "Kant felt the need, but thought that it was impossible to verify them, which is the same as saying, to experience them; for experience for him was always outward."<sup>233</sup> Prof. Raju contends that inward experience could verify them. Hence religion. But we may observe in brief that the nature of postulation is quite incorrectly represented by Professor Raju here. I may postulate a certain law and confirm it experimentally, or even verify it deductively by showing that its negation would lead to conceptual difficulties. But I cannot claim to have known that law, in terms of intuitive, self-evident knowledge, which knowledge in our present—and Raju's—frame of reference is. In the place of law, I may even postulate God and claim confirmation in personal experience, and also show how refusal to postulate him would lead to contradictions in thought, as Kant did. But by no stretch of imagination can I say that I know him. This is exactly true of the *intuitus originarius* as Kant presented it. I postulate it, but I know no way of possessing it either through outward experience or inward experience. And what Prof. Raju calls "inward experience" was not altogether unknown to Kant. So the question is asked, can we then have a special discipline, a special mode of realization by means of which we can attain to a self-evident knowledge of reality?

(2) Suppose we have such a special discipline, a special method leading to such absolute knowledge, will it not be the result of a technique? How can we assert that a technique can lead us to self-evident knowledge of reality?

(3) Suppose, again, that we have a technique adequate for

<sup>232</sup> "The Inward Absolute and the Activism of the Finite Self" in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 528.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 529.



this—which integral experience is,—then we must realize that the technique is calculated to lend us from the state *non-A* to the state *A*. Now *non-A* differs from *A* not by degrees but absolutely; contradiction as well as contrariety are absolute. All difference is absolute. A thing does not differ from another thing without differing absolutely. However, without seeking the aid of this extraneous logic we can state that at any rate for our frame of reference this is so: relative knowledge and absolute knowledge are absolutely different from each other. Do we not then have a theoretical and practical problem here, because one will have to cover an infinite distance, which would require an infinite number of steps or at least a miracle to cover? Or one might require an infinite last step, which again has to be taken through a miracle.

(4) Can we not say that the taking of an infinite number of steps is practically impossible and theoretically absurd? On the contrary, if we are enabled to cover the infinite distance by some miracle can we maintain that the resultant consciousness is absolute, self-evident knowledge? Radhakrishnan tells us that "creative insight is not the final link in a chain of reasoning. If it were that it would not strike us as inspired in its origin."<sup>234</sup> But if it is not the final link in a chain of reasoning, can we not use the same logic and assert that it is not the final link in a chain of spiritual experiences? On the whole, Radhakrishnan does not seem to raise the question. But he states that "it advances by leaps," and perhaps the final leap may be a miracle that will completely conquer the distance between *non-A* and *A*. It may be that this is near to what Prof. E. A. Burtt describes when he speaks of "the kind of experience referred to in religious terminology" as 'conversion.'<sup>235</sup> But conversion cannot be spoken of as involving knowledge of ultimate reality. The stuff of the experience in conversion is faith. Nor can we say that integral experience, which is attained by leaps—closer to what can be called miracle than to anything else—does also involve, in spite of Radhakrishnan's assertion, any real knowledge of reality.

(5) Miracle involves break with our present consciousness and the whole gamut of our present experience. Now, how can we

<sup>234</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 176.

<sup>235</sup> E. A. Burtt, "Intuition in Eastern and Western Philosophy" in *Philosophy East and West*, University of Hawaii, January, 1953.

designate a particular experience as knowledge unless it is continuous with our present, actual knowledge and is capable of being verified by it? Radhakrishnan is aware of this; that is why he is anxious to present an experience that will embrace both continuity and break. It is all right to have a vision of such an experience but when we come to practice or *yoga* the two will have to fall asunder. (On this point classical Advaita Vedanta seems to score over integral experience in view of its uncompromising affirmation of the axiomatic character of self-evident knowledge, which the subject really possesses by the very fact of being the subject. But it too gives rise to questions, because, though it would argue that axiomatically we have self-evident knowledge of the ultimate reality, which is our own real self, it also concedes the existence of such a thing as a state of empirical existence conditioned by illusion or error, which in practice makes the consummatory knowledge something still to be attained and worked for. To this extent it does share some of the difficulties that Radhakrishnan's integral experience comes up against. But one point must be clarified—Vedanta's affirmation of the axiomatic, self-evident knowledge is not meant for the strengthening of empirical propositions, in the way in which neo-cartesians use Descartes' axiom of *Cogito ergo sum* for arriving at self-evident empirical propositions concerning the world,<sup>236</sup> but for creating a particular variety of knowledge aimed at ultimate spiritual realization. And also since it does not tell us anything about the world except that it is illusory—for there are no categories of reality to be applied to it,—its case is stronger than that of the cartesians.<sup>237</sup> But the other difficulty, viz. that regarding the attainment of the consummatory knowledge, stands.)

<sup>236</sup> Professor Nagel takes issue with Professor Ducasse on the point of the latter's neo-cartesian adherence to the principle of self-evidence of some propositions. (Vide Ernest Nagel, the article "Truth and Knowledge of the Truth" in *Logic Without Metaphysics*, particularly, pp. 159-167).

<sup>237</sup> Vedanta also requires a certain minimum number of propositions, at least the *Mahavākyas* (the great sayings), like *Tat tvam asi* (that thou art), *Aham Brahma' smi* (I am Brahman), *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (all this is Brahman), etc.—to build its reflective structure on. The criticisms that Prof. Nagel urges against Prof. Ducasse and his neo-cartesianism may be applicable here, because these self-evident propositions may also be reflective propositions, which are really the termini of previous enquiries, and as such may have to be subjected to all that reflective statements are subjected to. Take for instance the proposition "the self is universal." I am here obviously using reflection

(6) If miracle is disallowed, we will have to look upon the technique leading to absolute knowledge as akin to culture, similar to the process of education which involves, if not psychosomatic exercises, at least some sort of intense discipline and training of the mind and imagination, so as to effect the energizing and accentuation of our powers of the mind. Now if we go through these processes, two problems arise. (a) Such vast phenomenological changes will take place in us, akin to what takes place in "brain-washing"—perhaps the effect may not be baneful but beneficial in the case of the particular changes contemplated—that the sense of reality that we now entertain and what constitutes knowledge for us now may have no connection with the corresponding factors that will be present in the changed condition. So it would be senseless to regard the resultant experience as constituting knowledge of reality. It has been said that Kant thought it impossible for us to have the knowledge of the Unconditioned because all our experiences are conditioned. The ready answer for this is, remove the conditions. (For Radhakrishnan the conditionedness consists in the fact that our individual personality is far short of the stage of perfection; therefore in order to remove the conditions we must fulfil ourselves by integral experience. For the orthodox advaitins, the illusoriness of individuality itself is the condition and the prius of all conditions; hence it must be eliminated.) But is it not possible to consider that the methods by which we seek to remove the conditions would themselves constitute a condition? Does it probably not prove that Kant's doctrine is very pervasive? (b) Radhakrishnan seems anxious to obviate the possibility of these negative factors of the phenomenological changes intruding into the kind of knowledge that comes in integral experience. Therefore he is at pains to show that our present state of experience is not contradicted but only deepened. If we have to have one term to describe the normal relation of experience to reality—armed with the weapon of self-criticism, it is 'intellect'. Therefore Radhakrishnan cautions his readers that though integral experience "lies beyond intellect," "it is not contrary to it."

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and deductive reasoning to combine two entities, the self—which alone can be based on subjective self-evidence—and the concept of the universal. The copula "is" combines them and gives us a proposition, which cannot properly claim to be self-evident except in the cartesian sense.

It is not "a-logical but supra-logical." However, the naturalist philosopher would counter by asking if it is not the case that the prefix "supra" is employed as a convenient way of describing something that we do not feel responsible to account for on the basis of our knowledge of nature and natural knowledge. It may be conceded that ambiguity prevails as to the extent to which Radhakrishnan would permit integral experience to be continuous with nature and natural experience. But, ultimately it must be perceived that such ambiguity does not impair Radhakrishnan's position, for one of the distinct features of integral experience is that it seeks to combine continuity and discontinuity. Integral experience is designed to break through the boundary between "nature" and "super-nature". From the point of view of integral experience Reality is not sundered into two parts, "nature" and "super-nature". The naturalist would want the standards for testing the knowledge and reality offered by integral experience to be entirely supplied from the side of "nature". This is unfair and Radhakrishnan cannot allow it, for integral experience is something about which "nothing more can be said". Yet this declaration does not, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, place integral experience outside the order of natural knowledge altogether, and it does not put it radically out of touch with universal reason and universally significant experience,—which sum up the real epistemological significance of "nature,"—for to do so would be completely unsettling to philosophy and even to Radhakrishnan's philosophy as what it seeks to do is not merely to describe something but describe it in a universally valid philosophical manner. Speaking in general terms, any experience that would seek to become the subject of universally valid philosophical discourse has to fall within the structure of nature and the structure of reason.

And yet, while Radhakrishnan would rule out any suggestion of radical discontinuity with nature and reason, without the qualifying integrality that binds discontinuity with continuity, he would contend that knowledge is not a mere horizontal progression of nature and logic but equally a vertical progression that of course keeps its base on the solid ground of nature and reason. Integral experience is therefore not just area but volume as it were, to put it in terms of geometric imagery although this imagery itself is inadequate as the dimension to be expressed is

interior and non-spacial rather than external and spacial. Thus the difference between knowledge here visualized and any other type of knowledge is qualitative. The suggestion by Professor George P. Conger that Radhakrishnan's philosophy of integral experience "needs to be purged of its inconsistencies, and to become more genuinely integral, inclusive of more facts, more science, more naturalism",<sup>228</sup> could be accepted if it means only that the horizontal basis of integral experience must be set straight and strengthened but has to be rejected if it purports to ignore the inner qualitative difference that distinguishes the type of knowledge under consideration from all other knowledge. Integral experience can never be hitched on to a philosophy of religion based on a naturalist epistemology.

Naturalism as well as that rationalism which is dependent on naturalism produces, Radhakrishnan would contend, only a horizontally constructed world, whereas "Throughout the history of Indian thought, the ideal of a world behind the ordinary world of human strivings, more real and more intangible, which is the true home of the human spirit, has been haunting the human race."<sup>229</sup> Radhakrishnan can hardly be expected to place his doctrine which is suffused through and through with the vision of another world, or a world conceived differently, on a naturalistic footing. Naturalism and that rationalism which goes with it, as against nature and reason in a non-restricted sense, are concepts of limitation as they both seek to limit reality arbitrarily to the horizontal base. On the contrary, "nature" and "reason" are authentic and legitimate elements in a religious epistemology, but it must also be recognized that they are different in this context from what they are in the context of of naturalistic discourse. The controlling principle is Reality known through integral experience and not either nature or super-nature taken as absolute.

To conclude, integral experience has built up a very strong case against the view of reality and the knowledge of reality taken by naturalism. But the question still can be raised whether anything more is positively accomplished metaphysically and epistemologically than the defiance of the arbitrary limits that naturalism has imposed on reality and the knowledge of reality: this applies not only to naturalism but to all positivistic philo-

<sup>228</sup> Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>229</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 768.

sophy. This is indeed a very great achievement. True, integral experience visualizes Reality in an unlimited and universal way; but can it be asserted that through integral experience that one *knows* it as it is? However, specific mystical intimations of Reality cannot be doubted. It is only from a naturalist-positivist's limited point of view that a mystic's experience may be called into question. When we shift to the Kantian point of view, what is questioned is not the fact that the mystic comes to a knowledge of something that is real but the claim that something which is real he comes to a knowledge of is Reality as it is, the thing-in-itself. It is certainly not possible to deny that the mystic's knowledge of that order of reality he is in contact with is as real and authentic as our ordinary knowledge of physical and social reality. The mystic does not answer the philosopher's quest for universal reality, but he only adds another very serious problematic, which the honest philosopher dare not by-pass. However, the mystic's reality is a religiously conceived one and will be closed to those who do not participate in the mystical-religious experience actually or through a dedication of the will. From the mystic's point of view there is nothing absurd in maintaining that, theoretically, it is possible for every man to possess the mystical-religious experience that is accessible to the mystic through the employment of some technique or *yoga*. But from the philosopher's point of view even this possibility does not bring to an end his epistemological quest, for after all that which is known to all, the very obvious, constitute his problematic. Real knowledge is in terms of universal principles alone and as such transcends every direct and immediate knowledge, however compellingly truth-bearing *spiritually* such knowledge may be to the individual who possesses it. The real problem in epistemology is not *who* may know reality but *how* may one know it and how may one know that that which one knows as real through direct and immediate acquaintance is reality *conceived universally*. To come to integral experience again, we can conclude that the *yoga* element in it does not go beyond extending the mystic knowledge as a theoretical possibility open to all. The *yoga* element in it does not go beyond mysticism epistemologically, although integral experience aims at going beyond mysticism as a universally valid formulation of knowledge.

In terms of the foregoing we will maintain that an infinite

gap will remain between the very summit of the direct and immediate knowledge of something that is real and universally valid knowledge of reality. It must be granted that there is a reality that is known legitimately and most positively through mystical experience, or, we can say integral experience; but reality as such can be only theoretically constructed *via negativa* and *via absentia* through universal principles alone, which according to Kant, is not only unknown but, by the very nature of the case, unknowable. But in a very real way integral experience bridges this infinite gap between the two not through knowledge however, but through faith. To assert that the one is the other is not an act of knowledge but an act of faith, and to do so would not close the agnostic possibility of the mind persisting in denying such an identity and outrunning every equation to take refuge in the postulate of the unknowable alone. In short, there are no pure channels of knowledge to cross over this abyss. The nature of the mind—again not mind conceived psychologically or empirically but in terms of universal, abstract principles—is such that it has to posit reality as ultimate and as beyond its ken to know. This agnosticism itself is a rational need of the mind. Thus it is *rational* to deny to the mind the ability to know reality as a rational act. Philosophy cannot go beyond this. In a sense much of the complicated arguments of Kant, concerning the transcendental reduction of the categories and so on, can be reduced to this very simple but powerful insight.

Radhakrishnan is one with Kant in his affirmation that, in respect of being, reality is transcendent but opposes him when he says that such reality is by definition beyond any possibility of knowledge. Naturalists and positivists oppose Kant on both counts. They would claim a total range for nature and would assert—against Radhakrishnan—that outside of nature the word 'experience' is meaningless. They would ask for a sign in nature for everything and demand that any claim to experience be proved on the pulse of nature. Their claim, however, need not be conceded.

It seems certain that Radhakrishnan is genuinely concerned with an alternative to the Kantian transcendentalism and agnosticism on the one hand the limitation of reality in respect of both being and knowledge to nature and to the positively known that naturalists and positivists stand for. Radhakrishnan

would disclaim that he provides this alternative but he does make some arresting proposals, which if followed through might provide at least a partial answer. It is not true, however, that there is absolutely no alternative between Kantian agnosticism and naturalist-positivist realism, and integral experience warrants serious consideration as an epistemology that has boldly attacked the problem, in which lies its virtue. There is a positive side to Kantian agnosticism, a problematic side, which is faith-warranting, in which integral experience does not militate against it. For it is problematic, not dogmatic.

It is to be noted that Radhakrishnan's is an open-ended philosophy. He introduces a tension in philosophy so that it goes beyond itself to philosophy of religion, to theology. In the last analysis his epistemology is justified not as "pure" epistemology but as religious epistemology. Genuine religious epistemology has always recognized the mystery of the identity of the Reality or God known through experience and the Reality or God postulated through the use of universal principles of Reason. Integral experience is a philosophy that sits poised on the edge of the one to swing over to the other, and this can be done only as an act of faith which is a religious act and not an act of "pure" epistemology.

It is also to be noted that Radhakrishnan speaks in the most general terms of integral experience and is engaged in constructing a universal language for it. Since his epistemology is finally justified as religious epistemology, the possibility of a specific religion using it for its own knowledge of the Divine Reality in the most universal terms is not ruled out. The identity between such a Divine Reality and Divine Reality postulated through the use of universal categories can be maintained and maintained only by a religious act of faith.

Faith in the context of integral experience should not be conceived as a pole in the dichotomous relation of faith versus reason. In integral experience there is no such dichotomy and faith is not irrational. If faith is made to intervene to restore epistemological coherence to integral experience, reversely, faith is redeemed from irrationality by integral experience.

The faith here is bound up with a vision, not with a programme. It is necessary in order to perceive the correct meaning and value of integral experience as a new formulation of knowledge of



Reality to de-emphasize its programme or *yoga* aspect and emphasize its vision or *darśana* aspect.

### INTEGRAL EXPERIENCE AS *Darśana*

Now, it is true that the *yoga* aspect of integral experience is not peripheral to the scheme of that philosophy, for the possibility of realization is presented seriously; yet it is not central in any real sense, so that even if it is disproved the essential scheme of that philosophy is not going to collapse. Furthermore, it is to be noted with real satisfaction that no techniques of meditation, self-discipline or mind-control is suggested; integral experience is not proposed as a kind of Zen: it is philosophy and not technique of realization. It is only true that the most general conditions for realization are discussed from a philosopher's point of view. But the criticisms that we raised were against the assumptions, (a) that these conditions can be fulfilled and (b) that the fulfilment of these conditions, granting its possibility, will bring about realization.

But such criticisms as we have raised do not detract from the greatness and sublimity of the vision that the philosophy of integral experience offers. And this vision is what really matters. This philosophy is also truly practical, as, as we stated in the introduction Radhakrishnan stresses the practical nature of philosophy. It is practical not in the sense that it gives a technique of attaining *mukti* but in the sense that it helps to live our life with knowledge and understanding and in times of testing to rise above the conflicts of life. Here is Radhakrishnan's own moving personal testimony: "This is the philosophy which by different paths I have attained, a philosophy which has served me in the severest tests, in sickness and in health, in triumph and in defeat. It may not be given to us to see that the faith prevails; but it is given to us to strive that it should."<sup>240</sup> It has also practical bearing on the life of society as a whole, which has been affirmed in innumerable places. "Its acceptance will solve many of our desperate problems and will bring peace to men of good will."<sup>241</sup>

This philosophy gives a vision of the integrity of life, a vision of the eternal solidarity of society, a vision of unboundedness of

<sup>240</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*), p. 82.   <sup>241</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82.

history. All this is bound up with the perception of the essential religious element that underlies life, society and history. "There are no fundamental differences among the people of the world . . . They are all working for a religion which teaches the possibility and the necessity of man's union with himself, with nature and with his fellow men, and with the Eternal Spirit of which the visible world is but a manifestation and upholds the emergence of a complete consciousness as the destiny of man."<sup>242</sup> The unity of mankind, not a superficial unity but a deep spiritually-based one, is a theme to which Radhakrishnan recurs time and again. In the task of bringing about this the role of religion, as he sees religion, is fundamental. One cannot but agree that there is a deep wisdom, the wisdom of the ages in the position taken by him. "If religion is the awareness of our real nature in God, it makes for a union of mankind based on communion with the eternal."<sup>243</sup>

It gives a vision of the solidarity of religion with the whole of life and the whole striving of nature. "Religion is not a particular way of life, but the way of all life."<sup>244</sup> "It (religion) sees in all the same vast universal need it has felt in itself."<sup>245</sup> Religion is integral with nature; it is not anti-nature. "To look upon the world as undivine is a speculative aberration. God is not jealous of his own works."<sup>246</sup> By the same token, nature is incomprehensible if we alienate it from God. "The world is an abyss of nothingness if we take away its roots in the divine."<sup>247</sup> This means that a glorious vision of nature is also offered.

It gives a vision of the integrity of religion in itself. "The unity of religions is to be found in that which is divine or universal in them and not what is temporary and local. Where there is the spirit of truth there is unity."<sup>248</sup>

It gives a vision of tolerance, religious as well as other. "The claim to the possession of a unique revealed truth, which declines to be classified as one among many, is ruinous for men. It is dangerous both in its motive and in its consequences." "History offers abundant evidence that believers in an absolute, whether it is an absolute economic system or an absolute political doctrine, or an absolute religious faith, develop intolerance."<sup>249</sup> "Truth wears many vestures and speaks in many tongues. The spirit of

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.      <sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.      <sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.      <sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.      <sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.      <sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>249</sup> "Reply to Critics" (Schilpp, *Op. Cit.*), p. 810.

truth requires us to admit that others may also be in the right, as ourselves. To imagine that God's nature can be known with certainty and that our dogmas set them forth is the source of all fanaticism."<sup>250</sup> Yet he would maintain that absolute truth is knowable. But what is objected to is the claim to absoluteness for particular historical perceptions and formulations. "The absoluteness of truth implies the relativity of all formulations of it. . . . Historical absoluteness does not carry with it the universal validity of its manifestations in cults and dogmas."<sup>251</sup> It is true that several religious thinkers have spoken up against Radhakrishnan's approach to the problem of religious truth.<sup>252</sup> Many have seen in it the deep hue of syncretism. But several others have seen it as the only acceptable solution to the problem.<sup>253</sup> However, without being partisan, we must in any case grant that it is at least a possible way of approach. Philosophy can and ought to approach the problem of religious truth from the most general considerations and it is not illegitimate for it to bring truth as constructed and conceived by particular historical faiths within its own comprehensive framework. It is granted that sometimes in achieving this Radhakrishnan accepts positions and puts forward interpretations that are at least controversial. Joachim Wach in his essay "Radhakrishnan and the Comparative Study of Religion" contributed to the Schilpp volume brings this out. But in any case we must not let philosophy surrender its right to examine the truth-formulations of particular religious faiths from an angle of vision that transcends the bounds of such faiths. This in the last resort can never amount to disservice to those faiths.

It gives a balanced and liberal vision of social and political life, which is subordinated to a glorious vision of man. This imposes upon man political and social responsibility. Although the machinery of political and economic life and the forms of culture cannot do anything to help in the spiritual realization of man, which is his true destiny, they can do a lot to hinder it. The task of the democratic man is to keep them in their legitimate neutral role, and to prevent them from assuming positive roles as direct agencies in the fulfilment of man's destiny.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 810-811.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 811.

<sup>252</sup> D. G. Moses' *Religious Truth and Relations Between Religions*, raises this question.

<sup>253</sup> Arnold Toynbee is one of the most notable among those.

"Although the unitive knowledge of God here and now is the final end of man, it remains true that some forms of social and cultural life puts more obstacles in the way of individual development than others." The theme is treated fully in numerous writings. Individual human destiny is the supreme value to be guarded in society. "Every man whatever his racial or social origin is potentially a son of God, made in his image."<sup>254</sup> Radhakrishnan criticizes energetically the role of philosophers who helped to foster the idea of particular states or societies being regarded as the final manifestation of truth or spirit.

The vision of man that integral experience gives will not be complete unless we mention two cognate visions (a) vision of unlimited possibility and (b) a vision of ceaseless endeavour. Often in our consideration of history there is too much of a pre-occupation with earth-life, with planetary realities. We do not often think that history possibly stretches beyond the earth, space-wise as well as time-wise. One of the great merits of Radhakrishnan's integral experience is that it breaks through all barriers and crosses all bounds of determinism. No one can help being moved by the vigour with which he pushes back the obstinate frontiers of life and knowledge when he speaks about karma or rebirth. Karma thus for him is a doctrine not of determinism, but of freedom, unlimited freedom, death-defying freedom. When interpreted by Radhakrishnan karma becomes that power which looses us from the terrors of the determinism of the past. "Karma is not so much a principle of retribution as one of continuity. Good produces good, evil evil. Love increases our power of love, hatred our power of hatred. It emphasizes the great importance of right action. Man is continuously shaping his own self."<sup>255</sup> We get the picture of a mighty on-going stream which rushes from the infinite past and surges forward to the infinite future carrying conscious and self-determining man to his ultimate destiny. In fact it is this vision of ceaseless progress that ultimately may resolve the difficulties that integral experience as *yoga* faces. The vision is a grand speculative vision. Man is not penalized for eternity for losing a chance once given. Sin is not the end and tragedy not the finale.<sup>256</sup> The surging waves of life

<sup>254</sup> "Fragments of a Confession" (Schilop, *Op. Cit.*), p. 66.

<sup>255</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 276.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

go beyond the tragic. The spirit in man cannot be suppressed till it reaches its appointed goal. There is also a vision of the greatness and the adequacy of the human spirit for all its needs—a theme Radhakrishnan is never tired of reiterating. No events are such that man cannot be freed from their consequences.

All things in the world are at once causes and effects. They embody the energy of the past and exert energy on the future. Karma or connection with the past is not inconsistent with creative freedom. On the other hand it is implied by it. The law that links us with the past also assert that it can be subjugated by our free action. Though the past may present obstacles, they must all yield to the creative power in man in proportion to its sincerity and insistence. The law or Karma says that each individual will get the return according to the energy he puts forth. The universe will respond to and implement the demands of the self. Nature will reply to the insistent call of spirit.<sup>257</sup>

Radhakrishnan's philosophy of integral experience involves a significant revision of the traditional Advaita. The questions that the Advaita has always been called upon to answer are, is the drama of human life a meaningless story, an illusion, "a mere tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing?", or is it significant history?; are the struggles and travails of man of no avail or do human achievements have eternal value?; is the destiny of conscious life a mere return to where it came from or is it a consummation, a fulfilment that adds a new dimension to being?; is history such that it would make no difference if it had not been? Radhakrishnan answers all these questions positively and tries to do so as far as possible within the frame-work of Vedānta. This is no small achievement. This vision adds a new depth to thought as such. We shall close this discussion with the words from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, which Radhakrishnan himself quotes, to illustrate the glory and the freedom of the human spirit: "As is his desire, such is his purpose; as is his purpose, such is the action he performs; what action he performs, that he procures for himself."<sup>258</sup>

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276. *Tathākāmo bhavati, tat kratur bhavati; yat kratur bhavati tat karma kurute, yat karma kurute tat abhisampadyate* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, iv.4.5.)

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